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SELECTED SERMONS

BY

REV. CHRISTOPHER HUGHES,

Pastor of St. Mary's Church,

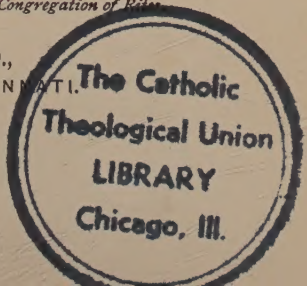
FALL RIVER, Mass.

WITHDRAWN

Introduction by Rev. Walter Elliott, C. S. P.

FR. PUSTET,
Printer to the Holy Apostolic See and the S. Congregation of Rites

FR. PUSTET & CO.,
NEW YORK AND CINCINNATI.
1891.



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✠ M. A. CORRIGAN,

ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK.

NEW YORK, OCT. 8, 1890

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INTRODUCTION.

"Having more things to write unto you," says St. John in his epistle to the Lady Elect, "I would not by paper and ink, for I hope that I shall be with you, and speak face to face, that your joy may be full." The fulness of joy for a Catholic congregation, is to have a good preacher as its pastor. The parochial relation is perfected by truth, zeal, patience, kindliness, sympathy, learning, the treasures of the priest's soul, borne to his peoples' hearts by words of paternal love.

The priest, therefore, who publishes sermons succeeds best if he stimulates preaching, otherwise what he calls sermons are essays. They are as such more or less worthy of praise, but they are not to be called by a better name than they deserve. The spoken word gains, indeed, by becoming, in addition, the written word; and the best office of the written word is to so win preachers to it that they will make it the spoken word.

Victor Hugo has a dramatic scene in one of his best written and worst meaning romances, *Notre Dame de Paris*. He pictures one of his heroes looking out of a window, his hand resting on the

open pages of a printed book, one of the first products of the then newly invented art of printing. He is looking at the majestic cathedral of Notre Dame, and he declares that the book shall destroy it, *Ceci tuera cela*, meaning that architecture can never triumph again as it did before the invention of printing, for it was then the only adequate expression of truth and beauty possible for the instruction of the vast masses of mankind. Without the press the whole people could never be otherwise reached. The art of printing, he would say, opens to the eyes and to the souls of all, the lessons of the great cathedral in the quiet of the chamber, and dispenses from the toil and expense of such structures. Yet in our own day, five hundred years after that occurrence is supposed to have happened, the great cathedral was not thought too majestic to be the fitting scene of the oratory of Lacordaire. If all speech must be only printed, the romancer is right, but the regular application of the divinest influence, not purely sacramental, the world knows, the contact of soul with soul in the exercise of the prerogative of human speech is worthy of all that the genius of the architect can produce. The printing of religious truth no more hinders the building of great churches than the printing of Shakespeare's plays hinders the building of great theatres. Of course Victor Hugo would know nothing of a temple built simply

for God's honor, built to be the palace of the Eucharistic King, but in the very fulness of the highest utility the spoken truth is worthy of every accompaniment that art can bring in tribute to it.

The difference between the merely written and the spoken word is like that between the monarch and his ambassador. Words were given to men to be spoken before written. Again, the difference is that between the old law and the new, the one written upon tables of stone and the other, burnt by fiery tongues upon the tablet of the heart. If the printed word reaches more men than the spoken word, the latter wins men more completely.

The orator expresses his thought not only by his words, but also by the noble bearing of his form, the power of appropriate action, the fire of his glance, and the charm of nature's most captivating music, the human voice. The word that is spoken is more than doubly said, the word that is written is not so much as half said. To win persuasion one uses the whole man as the advocate of the truth, at the same time having the whole man immediately subject to the effort ; the writer can use but the dead types as a medium and can reach the soul through but one of the senses.

To aid Catholic pastors in performing rightly their high function of the ministry of the word of God, Father Hughes has published this volume of

sermons, and in our opinion he has done his work well. The test of excellence in a sermon no less than in a preacher is experiment. Himself a good preacher, the author publishes but a comparatively small number of sermons out of very many actually preached by him, some of them more than once. The clergy are here invited to examine these sermons chosen from a multitude of others, really preached to an average city congregation and preached over again, and now offered after careful revision. The style, though not unrhetorical, is good, clear, forcible English, the sentences short, the matter cleared of all extraneous thought and the manner of all verbiage.

The sermons are all of them brief, so that they may be readily committed to memory by beginners, or serve as outlines for the more practiced ; dealing each with one idea of strictly religious value, simply viewed, well illustrated, powerfully advocated and enforced. The tone is at once earnest and priestly adapted to the altar and the pulpit. Holy Scripture is happily and abundantly quoted. The range of subjects does not expressly tally with the routine of the ecclesiastical year, though the topics chosen are such as to serve practically the same purpose. Some of the sermons are on the critical points of controversy of our times, touching the relation of the religious and the civil states of men, and the

bearings of our civilization on the spiritual life. Others of them are such as are not to be found, as far as our knowledge goes, anywhere printed in Catholic publications of this sort, that is to say, those which give utterance to the voice of religion on patriotic occasions, such as Decoration Day; and others again arouse tender memories of the cradle-land of our Irish-American congregations.

Education, viewed from a standpoint at once American and Catholic, is fully represented in the choice of subjects made by the author. There is a fine sermon on Religious Indifferentism, and an inspiring one on Intemperance, preached at the opening of the Convention of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union in 1876. Prayer, confession, the Eucharist, sanctifying grace and its effects, are treated of with much power, the supernatural gifts of the Christian state being fully displayed. A beautiful sermon for Advent, entitled The King's Return, a very moving and yet very practical charity sermon, entitled Almsgiving, one on the Uncanonized Saints of Ireland, one preached at the funeral of a priest, others on the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph and St. Patrick, these have impressed us as of particular use for the great body of Catholic preachers. Finally, these sermons, so brief and so plain and yet so full of instruction and so earnest in tone, are well adapted for the use of persons who are hindered from attending Sunday mass, or who desire devotional reading for the sick.

WALTER ELLIOTT, C. S. P.

CONTENTS.

I.	The Church and Civilization,	9
II.	The Work of the Church,	13
III.	The Threefold Mission of the Church,	18
IV.	Indifferentism in Religion,	26
V.	Salvation and Prayer,	30
VI.	Sanctifying Grace,	36
VII.	The Unknown God,	44
VIII.	The King's Return,	52
IX.	Christmas,	61
X.	The Two Judgments,	69
XI.	Almsgiving,	78
XII.	The Sorrowful Mother,	90
XIII.	The Refuge of Sinners,	101
XIV.	The Assumption,	110
XV.	St. Joseph,	115
XVI.	All Saints,	124
XVII.	St. Patrick's Day,	131
XVIII.	St. Vincent de Paul,	146
XIX.	The Uncanonized Saints of Ireland,	159
XX.	The Funeral of a Priest,	173
XXI.	The Public Schools,	178
XXII.	Our National Legacy,	192
XXIII.	Our Nation's Heroes,	203
XXIV.	Intemperance,	206
XXV.	Freemasonry,	210

The Church and Civilization.

"And the Gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising."—*Is., lx. 3.*

The Catholic Church to which we belong is often called the "Old Church" and that very properly. She antedates all those human forms of Christianity which surround us, and might have been called the "old church" long before any of their authors had seen the light of day. And yet notwithstanding this venerable old age there is not a wrinkle on her brow, no decrepitude in her limbs, but she posesses at this moment all the vitality, energy and zeal which characterized her when she started out on her apostolic mission. And this, I maintain, is no baseless assertion, but a fact that is well proved by the religious history of our country during the last few years.

This rapid growth and wonderful success of the Church fill our hearts with joy, and in the exuberance of our spirits we cry out with the Psalmist: "*Prospere procede et regna;*" *i. e.*, "Go on in prosperity, thou grand old Church, and continue over us thy sweet and blessed reign!"

Oh! every one of us loves this Church; and why should we not love her? She is the very embodiment of the divinity walking among us; she has the light of God's holy countenance shining on her forehead, and words of wisdom are ever flowing from her lips. She has been to us the source of unnumbered joys in the

past; she is the mainstay of our weakness in the present, and the beacon light of our hopes for the future.

Just in proportion as we love and revere her, is she ignored and despised by those who do not recognize her divine character. Some even unite in calumniating her, and wish the world were rid of her. These call her the promoter of ignorance, the obstructer of learning, and the opponent of civilization, when, on the contrary, it is a fact that all the social improvements of the human race during the Christian era and all the advantages and and glories of modern civilization are to be attributed directly or indirectly to her, as to their legitimate cause. In proof of this I appeal to history. When she first started out from the upper chamber in Jerusalem, she found the Roman Empire in the zenith of its power and splendor. It was grand to look at externally, but internally it contained all the elements of corruption and death. I need only point out its three leading features, to justify this assertion. Poverty was considered a crime, slavery was the corner-stone of the social fabric, and despotism was the right of the ruler. To correct this state of affairs she consecrated poverty and made it one of the jewels of the Christian profession; she condemned slavery by preaching the equality of men, recognizing in them the same origin and the same end, and she throttled despotism by ever throwing her weighty influence between the down trodden and the oppressor.

The same spirit which caused her to oppose and destroy these noxious elements of Pagan civilization, made her rise in her strength to save Rome from the savage onslaught of the Northern Barbarians in the Fourth Century. These fierce and ruthless warriors hurled themselves like an avalanche upon the affrighted city. They came

not to conquer merely and subdue their opponents but to stamp out every vestige of civilization. It was the Catholic Church alone that dared to meet these savages. She commanded them to halt in their work of destruction. She spoke to them in kindness and, as one having authority induced them to lay down their arms, and finally she moulded these untutored sons of the forest into the most polished nations of the earth. The chief means she used in accomplishing this great feat, the institution of monasticism, the founding of free schools and universities constitute a theme too large and expansive for the scope of this very limited address.

And again a second time did she save civilization when the scimitar of Mahomet was raised against Europe and the Crescent threatened to supplant the Cross. She saw the danger and called on her sons to avert it; and were it not for the prayers of the Pope St. Pius V. and the valor and courage of the Catholic Knights who fought at Lepanto, half of Europe would perhaps be now wearing the turban of the Turk, reading the Koran and praying with their faces toward Mecca.

Turn we now to the arts of peace and we behold the Church exercising her fostering care in developing all the best capabilities of the human mind. In literature, in history, in eloquence, poetry and philosophy, in painting, in sculpture, music and architecture, her sons have risen to the very pinnacle of sublimity, and have been crowned by an admiring world with the rays of immortality. Among these distinguished men of genius I will single out only two whose transcendent talents have shed a glory around the age we live in. At the beginning of this Century Canova renewed in Rome the glory of Phidias and Praxiteles. His name will ever be associated with those of Michael Angelo and Raphael. It

was said, "Italy has great names; still, Europe, the world has but one Canova." The Emperor Napoleon I. wished to detain this great sculptor in Paris. But he absolutely refused; "For I could not," said he, "pursue my art but in Rome." "But I will transfer to Paris," said the Emperor, "all the great models of antiquity." "Sir," replied Canova, "for my purpose you would have to transfer Rome itself."

The other twin genius of our age is Overbeck, the great German Painter. I remember him well, for he is not long dead. His venerable form is yet passing before the eyes of my memory. The last time I saw him was during one of the days of Holy Week in St. John Lateran's near one of its noble columns, with a pious book in his hand and absorbed in his devotions. He was not always a Catholic, but was led into the Church by the fact that he could not find any aid to inspiration in the cold forms of Lutheranism. During the half century that he labored so successfully in Rome, he formed a school of religious art whose works rivaled the very best efforts of the early masters and won for him imperishable fame.

But time and the occasion forbid me to dwell longer on these interesting subjects. The passing allusion which I have thus made to the work and the influence of the Church shows that even the material world owes her a debt of gratitude which can never be paid, and that her enemies, in reviling and calumniating her as an opponent of progress, are either totally blind or they shut their eyes to the light of history.

As for us, my dear Brethern, who know the many benefits both spiritual and temporal that we have derived from this great Church, let us always glory in the fact that we are her children; let us always try to ad-

vance her interests, and above all let us lead lives that will be a reflex of her sound doctrine, and never be tarnished by an act condemned by her teaching.

The Work of The Church.

"But in the days of those kingdoms the God of Heaven will set up a kingdom, that shall never be destroyed, * * * and itself shall stand forever."

Not content with the triumphs and the laurels of the past, the Catholic Church is continually striving after new conquests, enlarging her tabernacles and pushing forward her outposts, and in the name of the God of hosts taking possession of lands hitherto ungraced by her presence.

The early history of this continent is but the history of her unflagging activity. She came over here with its great discoverer and its earliest explorers; and long before the bark of Roger Williams had ploughed through the tranquil waters of the Narragansett, and when Plymouth Rock was as yet unknown to fame and was hardly more than a resting place for the sea-gulls that came in from across the crested waves and lit upon its barren surface, the Catholic Church was here carrying out to the letter the injunction of her Divine Founder, "Euntes in mundum universum prædicate evangelium omni creaturæ, baptizantes eos in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti." "Go ye therefore into the whole world, preach the gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It is a matter, therefore, of considerable pride to be able to say that the first Christian hymn

whose melodious refrain awoke the echoes and resounded along the shores of this western continent was the Salve Regina, the hymn to the Blessed Virgin; the first act of public worship was the Holy Mass, celebrated on a rude altar under the shadow of a cocoanut tree in the island of San Salvador, on the 12th of October, 1492; the first minister of the gospel to put his foot on this virgin soil was a Catholic priest, and the first house of worship was the Catholic Chapel, erected in the town of Isabella in the island of San Domingo, and blessed by Father Boyle on the Feast of the Epiphany, 1494. From those early days down to the present time, covering a space of nearly four hundred years, she has under good and evil report kept bravely on with her noble and unselfish work; and the enduring monuments that testify to her eminent success are to be found in the multitudes of her religious edifices; her convents where the sacred vestals keep alive the perennial flame of charity to God and man; her asylums where the fatherless, the poor and the helpless aged are nursed and tended with a mother's care; her hospitals where beneficence vies with science in assuaging the pains and sufferings of afflicted humanity; her churches, and her princely cathedrals, where by the omnipotence of the keys, sins of every shade of malice are pardoned, where the most sublime teachings of the Gospel are expounded and where the fragrant sacrifice of Calvary is daily renewed on the Holy Altar. These, however, but constitute the material evidences of her inner life. To know what that life is, to know how she has operated on the souls of men I can proudly point to the faith and obedience of her millions of devoted children who form so large and so loyal a portion of this magnificent republic.

But although her ministrations are directed especially

to the members of her own household, her influence reaches out far and wide and makes its impression on every living soul in the land. Standing on the hill-tops and in the by-ways of life she never ceases to proclaim to the passers-by the great truths of faith, the unbending rules of a rigid morality, and the eternal principles of justice and right; and men who not only will not acknowledge her authority, but hate and revile her, are compelled to stand and admire the truth and beauty of her teachings. "This is the way," she says to them, "walk ye in it and turn not aside to the right nor to the left."

But marvelous and immense as have been the labors and the success of the Church in the past, still when we look around us and examine into the present state of society as we find it, we are almost tempted to say she has done little, and that the Gospel is a failure. The fact is she has not completely stemmed the torrent; she has only confined and narrowed its course and tamed its destructive violence. A great deal of labor is in store for her yet before she can, even in this land, reclaim back to God the many souls redeemed indeed by His precious blood, but yet going astray like sheep without a shepherd, and actually dying of starvation, because they have no one to break unto them the bread of life. This must be apparent to any intelligent man who ponders over the evils which now surround us. Look in the first place at the state of religion outside the church; there we hardly find such a thing as faith, for faith is by no means compatible with that continuous, unending, lifelong search in a book for the truths of revelation. Built, therefore, on no fixed and unchanging basis, with no principle of life within it, Protestantism as a religion is fast disappearing. Even the few

truths it retained after its revolt from the Church are rapidly losing their hold on the hearts of men and an unblushing infidelity is becoming the practical rule of the day, as we all know from our every day intercourse with our fellow-men, and from the very insignificant number of those who claim to be members of the various churches.

What is true of the grown-up portion of the community must be doubly true of the rising generation. Without any opportunity of being imbued with solid religious principles, either at home with their parents or in their schools as now constituted, with only the milk-and-water sentimentalities picked up once a week, in a Sunday bible-class of an hour's duration, surrounded by an infectious atmosphere, they can hardly fail of developing into the scoffing disciples of Thomas Paine and Robert G. Ingersoll.

Now when we consider this rapid growth and widespread development of infidelity, fostered and sustained by myriads of anti-christian, anti-social, and even immoral publications in the form both of books and newspapers that are deluging the land and polluting the very air we breathe, when I say we consider all this, how can we be astonished at the wickedness and crimes that daily force themselves upon our attention. What these crimes are you know as well as I. Their number is simply appalling. The list of their species is long enough. Forgeries, dishonest bankruptcies, cunningly planned frauds and legal robberies are so common that real, genuine, downright honesty is becoming rare in public life. There are witnesses to prove the truth of this assertion, for more orphans, more widows, more innocent and helpless persons have been plunged into misery and destitution by the educated rogues of this

age than by all the highway robbers and foot-pads of any previous century.

To the crimes of dishonesty are to be added the sin of intemperance, with all its disgraceful and disgusting concomitants, and that awful vice of impurity, the most degrading, the most pernicious, the most widely spread evil of the day. In the wake of this latter crime follow as a consequence insanity, wasting diseases, and premature deaths, infanticides, murders and suicides, not to speak of that legally recognized polygamy of the fashionable world called divorce. Reflecting on these things, we are forced to the conclusion already suggested by a certain able writer, that more property and more lives have been destroyed by the crimes of the so-called civilized society of to-day than by any of the most bloody wars of those semi-barbarous times called the Middle Ages.

Since such is the condition of our times, it is quite plain that the Church cannot sit down and fold her arms and say her mission is finished. Her life upon this earth is a warfare, and a warfare too that knows no ending and no respite. In this struggle, however, she is not discouraged for she has truth on her side, and through it she shall surely conquer. "Magna est veritas et prævalebit." "Great is the truth and it will prevail." She has also the assurance of her Divine Master that He will never abandon her. "For behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." Animated, therefore, with confidence by the promises of God, filled with zeal for His glory and strengthened by the strength of the Holy Ghost who is ever dwelling within her, she is at this very moment most earnestly engaged in the task set before her. Her voice is never still. Continually keeping before men's

minds their origin and their destiny, the terrible truths of eternity and the mysteries of the Incarnation, she is ever insisting on obedience to authority, on the sanctity of the marriage contract, its unity and indestructibility, and on the Christian education of the young. To the inspiration of her words she joins the efficacy of the sacraments and the tremendous power of impetration contained in the Holy Sacrifice, in order to effect her design, the regeneration and the sanctification of souls. This design has always been the cause of all her words and actions. It is to accomplish this more readily that she has built so many churches and scattered them so profusely, like lustrous gems through the length and breadth of the land.

It is for this that her religious orders of devoted men and women have established such numbers of monasteries, convents, schools, hospitals and asylums in our beloved country. With this object of winning and sanctifying souls, countless associations for prayer, penance and good works have been formed among all her people. And as long as the world lasts, as long as there is a single soul to be saved, she will continue her work, and not till the ranks of heaven are filled up with the redeemed of Jesus Christ will she rest from it to enter fully into the joy of her Lord.

The Three-fold Mission of the Church.

"And the government is upon his shoulder."—*Is. ix: 6.*

We are all aware of the intense hatred which the world bears to the Catholic Church and to its divinely appointed chief, the Pope of Rome. As the Church is the body of Christ, and as the Holy Father is the imper-

sonation of His authority, it is quite plain that this hatred is but the continuation of the old combat between Cæsar and Christ. Christ is a King and his Church is a Kingdom, though not of this world. In this fact alone is contained the full explanation of the bitter, undying animosity of the world. It wants to be entire master of the situation here below; it cannot brook a rival; it wants to wear the crown alone and be its own independent ruler. It does not want to be interfered with, even by Almighty God himself. It is jealous of His authority and would, if it could, banish Him from His own Creation. "If thou release this man," was the argument which prevailed with Pilate, "thou art not Cæsar's friend;" and when the Jews rejected Christ, they did it because "whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." The same detestable spirit which impelled the Jews to reject their Redeemer and crucify the Lord of glory is cherished and made manifest to us by the daily actions of the world. Everything relating to Christ and His work, if not openly repudiated, vilified or condemned, is at least treated with a most blasphemous indifference. This ever abiding hatred from her opponents is the peculiar inheritance and a distinguishing mark of the Church. All other religious denominations, no matter how anti-christian their tenets, no matter how impious and absurd their practices, are welcomed into the pantheon of the world's esteem, are set up on pedestals and cheered with the incense of flattery. The Catholic Church alone is shut out in the cold. A few years ago celebrations were held in honor of Martin Luther's birthday. Men spoke themselves hoarse in lauding what they called his mighty genius and his herculean works. When we throw the light of impartial history on the disorderly life of this Apostate monk and consider his law-

less mind, his sensual indulgences, his filthy talk, his broken vows and his self-acknowledged intimacy with the devil, we are at a loss to see how any intelligent man, how any sincere, virtue-loving Christian can rise up to do him reverence. "Would to God," said Calvin speaking of him, "that he would think a little more of his own vices." If any man ever needed the benefits of a reformation, Luther was that man. His system of theology too, was as disastrous to society as his morals were to himself. By making human reason the critic of revelation and by constituting every man his own guide both in faith and in morals, he dug away the very foundations of revelation, he opened the road to every error, to Pantheism, Deism and Atheism, and sowed the seeds of rebellions and revolutions. The secret then of all this high-sounding applause is not to be detected in the character or the unenviable works of this unfortunate rebel, but in the fact that he had the reckless audacity to insult the Vicegerent of God, to resist this divinely appointed authority and to abuse and defame the spouse of Christ. The hatred of the Church therefore is the satisfactory explanation of it all.

Now after thus noticing this naturally distasteful prerogative of the Church, we shall cast a rapid glance over the field of her labors and observe a few of those special ways by which, notwithstanding all the obstacles cast in her way and all the calumnies hurled against her sacred character, she is yet asserting her divine commission and doing for mankind all that she can do. Her mission to humanity bears a triple character according as it is directed to the care of (1) the individual, (2) the family, and (3) civil society, and under each of these heads we have ample opportunity to remark her untiring watchfulness and her vigorous action.

Among the many things which engage her solicitude in the case of the individual, there is one especially that in these days she calls our attention to in a most emphatic manner. Religion, she says, must not be divorced from education. The arguments to which she appeals in handling this question cannot be gainsaid, and it is consequently every day receiving the endorsement of good, honest, fair-minded, reflecting Protestants who have the intelligence to perceive the way things are drifting and are not afraid to publicly express their views. Our present system of public schools is based on the false supposition that the soul is endowed with intelligence alone. An education, to be what the word indicates, must not only aim at developing the faculties of the mind, it must also be directed towards the moulding of the heart and the will in accordance with the clear, undoubted, incontrovertible principles of morality and religion. It is very commonly imagined that the intellectual training of our Public Schools is a sufficient and efficacious cause of diminishing vice and promoting good citizenship. This is a most egregious mistake. "We have no evidence," says Herbert Spencer, "that education, as commonly understood, is a preventative of crime. Did much knowledge and a piercing intelligence suffice to make men good, then Bacon should have been honest and Napoleon should have been just." Much the same idea is expressed by Huxley, where he says, "If I am a knave or a fool, teaching me to read and write won't make me less of either one or the other." "There still lingers," we are told by the Baptist Weekly, "with many people an idea that education is a preventative of crime, but common schools are by no means certain to produce good citizens." If it is, then, only to make good citizens of our

children, we must give them a different training from what they are receiving in these godless schools, we must give them a religious education. Hence the time is coming fast, when our State schools; must be remodeled in the interest of a common Christianity. This is not a question of Bible against no Bible, it is not a question of Protestantism against Catholicity, but it is a question of the very life of Christianity against Infidelity or modern Paganism. It was for good reasons, therefore, that the Rev. Mr. Bradley, writing in a Presbyterian journal, says that "Religious schools seem to be the great want of the Nation." And "for my part," observes the Rev. Dr. Hall, a Presbyterian clergyman of New York, "I cherish the hope that the time will yet come, when by common consent common religious instruction and education may yet be carried into the schools." What one minister deplores as a want and another hopes for as a blessing, the Catholic Church is continually insisting on, as the most urgent duty of the hour. In accomplishing this purpose, her courage seems to border on the heroic. Although most unjustly taxed to support a system which she cannot in conscience use, she does not shrink from imposing on her people an extra burden in order to build up and carry on schools in which God will be recognized and in which it will be practically inculcated that there is another world beyond the grave, wherein virtue will be rewarded with unending happiness and vice punished with eternal woe.

Besides these strenuous and praiseworthy efforts that the Church is thus daily exerting in the care of the individual, we cannot fail to remark the earnest stand she is making in defence of the Christian family by maintaining the indissolubility of the marriage tie. The facility and frequency with which our statutes presume to sepa-

rate those whom God has joined together constitute a state of things which we would more naturally look for in the benighted and licentious periods of Pagan history than in this enlightened, nineteenth century. Our divorce courts are certainly the putrid sores of our boasted civilization. Nor does the progress of time diminish, but it augments the evil. Men without faith, with only the light of reason as their guide, see the ruin and destruction that must necessarily follow from this rising flood; they cry out to warn their fellows of the impending danger, but they will not be listened to. How, then, is the Christian family to be saved from this cancerous disease that is gnawing at its very vitals? By philosophy? No; philosophy may expand the intellect, inflate the mind, and harden the heart; it never can control the passions. By literature? No. Literature may appeal to the imagination, enrich the memory, and strew flowers along the path of life; it has no power over the human will. By human laws? No. Laws are made by the people through their rulers and representatives, and these acting for their constituents would not dare to touch with their little finger the cherished idols of those they serve. By Protestantism? No. Protestantism is a negative, it can do nothing. It is by a supernatural agency the work must be done. As the peaceful and Christian union of man and wife are built up, not on human motives which fluctuate and die and give no guarantee for permanence and stability, but on the subjugation of the passions, on mutual forbearance, and the fear of God, it is only by the Catholic church, by her authority, by her sacred appliances, by her influence that the Christian family can be rescued from the annihilation that threatens it.

Now, the same interest which she has always shown

in the welfare of the individual and the family is as evidently manifested in her relations towards civil society. Equally at home is she under all forms of government, whether it be the free democracy of the United States, the limited monarchy of England or the uncontrolled autocracy of the Chinese Empire. She has always striven to defend the people against tyranny, and the governing power against anarchy. Her success in past times in battling for liberty and human rights will, we trust, be realized again in our own day and country in her struggle against the intrigues of hostile bigotry, against communism, against divorce, against the selfishness of the rich and powerful, and against the oppressions of the poor and weak. Society is certainly in a very disturbed state in other lands. The rulers of Russia are in hourly dread of being blown to pieces. The king of bankrupt Italy sits upon a weak and vacillating throne. Royalty in Spain is filled with forebodings at the unsightly apparition of the "revolution." Prussia though flushed with recent victories has reason to fear the no-distant future. France cannot tell what changes in her government to-morrow's sun may witness, whilst in England there is a cloud appearing on the horizon that may any day burst with fury on the Capitol of that country and create a chaos which our imagination may not fathom. What is the cause of all this inquietude, this restlessness, this agitation, this insubordination, this instable state of society? The cause is easily traceable to the great religious revolution of the sixteenth century, and to the new doctrines broached in that age. The self-same principles which stir up rebellion against a Divine authority must have a tenfold more telling effect on human authority. The reformers sowed the wind, they are now reaping

the whirlwind, and perhaps the worst has not come yet. But amidst this universal upheaval of society, this arming of the nations, this changing of laws, this wrecking of thrones, there is one, the throne of Peter which never shakes and never fears destruction, and this is the one great source of order in this world. Were it not for this power, for its warranted firmness and for the principles it represents and maintains, society would long since have been torn asunder by the perversity of men, and if not entirely merged in a most degrading barbarism would be fast gravitating to it.

Now, my dear friends, when we consider what a wonderful institution this church of Jesus Christ is, when we consider all it has done, not only for the world at large but for each one of us in particular, we may well say with the Prophet, "Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi." "What shall I render to the Lord for all that he has done for me?" He has selected us from among thousands; and without any previous merit on our part, conferred on us in holy baptism the gift of faith, whereby we became the children of His church and partakers in all the graces and blessings with which she abounds. Let us then show our gratitude to God by loving His Church, by being interested in her welfare, by assisting her in her enterprises, and especially by being attentive to her teachings, and reducing to practice the lessons of holiness which like a good mother she is ever imparting to us.

Indifferentism in Religion.

"Therefore, brethren, stand firm; and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word or by our epistle."

—*II Thess., ii: 14.*

If there be any evils which we should expose and cry down, indifferentism in religion is certainly one of them. We need only consider its nature to be convinced of its absurdity, of its ruinous results, and consequently of the vigorous opposition we should show it. Viewed in that broadest sense in which every system of religious belief, Judaism, Mahometanism, Christianity and Buddhism are all placed on the same footing, it so outrages common sense that we are at a loss to conceive how it can find adherents among rational beings. It is its own condemnation. If Judaism contains all the divinely appointed means of saving mankind, Christianity would be a useless institution. If there is no harm in idolatry, God was unjust in charging it as a crime to the Jews. If the penitential spirit of the Gospel is the offspring of truth, it is impossible to defend the teachings of the Koran. We must then allow that there can be but one religion, if God ever gave a religion to man; and that he did so, reason, the history of all nations and the common consent of men force us to admit. To search out that religion, to embrace and practice it is the urgent duty of every man. Were its existence doubtful, were the truths it inculcates uncertain, were the immortality of the soul, the eternal joys and the everlasting pains of eternity questions admitting the smallest improbability, the great interests that are involved should lead us to a most serious and

unprejudiced examination of the matter. There is too much at stake to allow of any risk. In the ordinary affairs of life people call it prudence to prepare to make the best of events which may possibly occur. They would censure the general who disbelieving danger to be near, notwithstanding all he had heard to the contrary, would take no precautions, but lounge listlessly in his tent till he fell into the hands of his enemies; they would stigmatize the ruler who, rather than permit himself to be disturbed by the unpleasant rumors of treachery, became the victim of his own carelessness and love of ease. When prudence is considered so necessary in things which after all are but transitory, it certainly should not be excluded from our practice in questions that concern eternity.

But indifferentism or liberalism as it is commonly called, is sometimes taken in a commoner and a more restricted sense than that of which we have been speaking. It is used to designate a complete indifference to every religious body that claims Christ for its founder. According to this theory, the jarring and contradictory doctrines of Lutherans, Calvinists, Socinians, and Anglicans are all equally good, safe and tenable, so that it amounts to the same thing to admit the necessity of baptism with one party or to deny it with another, to confess the Trinity in this sect or repudiate it in that; to adore Christ in the Eucharist with the Catholics or to deny the real presence with the Presbyterians. Such a system of belief resembles more the inconsistent ravings of the demented than the judgments of a sane mind. The very idea of Christianity repels it as false. If Christ be the expounder of a divine revelation, the truths which He teaches must harmonize; for no doctrines of His can be discordant. He could not tell this thing to

one disciple to-day and teach the very contrary to another to-morrow. When He, therefore, commissioned His apostles to go forth and preach the Gospel to all nations, He gave to each one of them the selfsame faith to promulgate, the selfsame articles of belief to be taught, and so much did He insist on unity in this respect, as to declare salvation impossible for him who would refuse to accept the smallest portion of the common creed. As there is then no such thing as conflicting dogmas in the Christian Revelation, we must embrace the pure, simple truth, and repudiate the smallest error. The reason of this is apparent. Error in faith is heresy and heresy the Apostle ranks in the same category with homicide and adultery. Were such errors of no importance we cannot understand why St. John had such an abhorrence for those who impugned the truth, why so many councils assembled to defend it, why men have always been so ready to give up the last drop of their blood rather than surrender one jot or tittle of the true faith. On the same hypothesis too, it would be impossible to explain the anxious solicitude of the Roman clergy for the purity of their faith, the unwearied opposition of Protestant pulpits to Catholic altars, such efforts at proselytizing, so much quarreling, wrangling and angry feelings among men on account of religious opinions. To give, therefore, the same value to all forms of worship which bear the name of Christianity, is to declare war on reason, belie the Apostles and insult the judgment of ages. But what is more, this principle of liberalism includes a denial of the truth of Christianity itself and leads to practical atheism. To say that Christianity is from God, and to maintain that all the practices and multitudinous creeds of the different religious bodies are of equal value, because

a part of that Christianity, is to deny what we first asserted; for no work of God can contain contradictory elements.

The moral effects of this baneful doctrine fully bear out the theoretical deductions made from it. Before any religion can operate effectively against human weakness and human passions, it must first establish a conviction of its authority and its infallibility. Without such a conviction it cannot influence the will and subject it to restraint. Hence it follows, that he who pays the same regard to all forms of Christianity, because he is convinced of the truth of none of them, finds in none the force which would lead him to refrain from the indulgence of unlawful passions and gratifications. His actions will be regulated, as a rule, by the influence of transitory pleasure or by a sense of human respect, so that his life becomes a practical profession of Atheism.

From what we have said, we deduce not only the falsity but the criminality of the principle. When God gives a revelation to men which concerns their present and their future life, each one is bound to accept and follow that revelation just as it is given. Invincible ignorance will be the only excuse. But if notwithstanding remorse of conscience and doubts, one continues to fluctuate between the claims of different religious sects, he will certainly feel all the horrors of his condition at the hour of his death, and in those regions beyond the grave.

Since then, such is the nature of indifferentism how can Catholics be censured for rejecting it and maintaining the exclusiveness of their own religion? If they believe themselves right, they must certainly believe that all those dissenting from them are wrong; if they are per-

suaded that they possess the truth, they must likewise be convinced that all others are without it. They are thus acting on the most philosophical grounds. As they cannot give to error the same currency as to the truth, so they cannot say that all religions are as good as their own. It would not only be irrational but inhuman to do so. It is not here a question of an error in some geometrical problem or in astronomical observations. Such an error as that, as it hurts no one, could be easily overlooked or tolerated. But in religion it is a question of an error which may be the ruin of innumerable souls.

We could not stand by and see a fellow-creature deal death to himself without making an effort to prevent his deed of self-destruction, and shall the Church be accused of lack of charity, for pointing out the shoals where shipwreck is inevitable, or for warning people from the path that leads to eternal death? She cannot be blamed, for she only continues what her Founder did before her. No one loved men more than He, and yet He hesitated not to tell them this truth. He wished all to be saved, but saved by the means He had appointed. We cannot change His law, nor should we allow ourselves to be so overcome by a mistaken philanthropy and a false sentimentality, as to deny it, cover it over or obscure it to the detriment of men's souls.

Salvation and Prayer.

"And all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive."—*St. Matt. xxi: 22.*

To a person who thinks seriously, the matter of salvation cannot but form a subject for deep reflection. Sal-

vation was the reason of our creation, it should be the unfailing hope of our hearts and the constant aim of our lives. It should be the pulse that quickens our every action, the thought that engrosses our entire attention. It should be our morning aspiration and our evening prayer. If we are saved, it will matter very little what was our lot in this world; it will matter very little that we lived in poverty, contempt and sufferings overwhelmed as it were with evils. But if we are not saved our souls will suffer a loss for which there is no word to express its magnitude and for which there is nothing to compensate us—no, not even all the riches of the world, not all the power and pomp of the highest station, not all the honor which men could give. Of this truth Christ Himself reminds us when He says, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul." The truth conveyed by these divine words is so evident that it seems like waste of time to urge its acceptance on any one. It is plain, therefore, that salvation is a thing of the most absolute and imperative necessity. It is something that concerns our own selves, not anybody else; it is something whose measure is the unending ages of eternity; it is something on which depends that happiness for which our natures are continually yearning and whose loss will be the occasion of that wailing cry of misery and despair which rings forever through the regions of the damned. Now if the salvation of our souls is something that can in nowise be dispensed with, no matter what may become of everything else; if it is of such a nature that our hearts without it will contain a void which nothing else can fill, certainly it cannot be with sentiments of indifference that we view the obstacles which oppose our attainment of it. These are many and various, all springing

from that well known triple source: the world, the flesh, and the devil. We are continually encountering these difficulties. Night and day they beset us, harassing us with a fierce and distressing warfare. These we must overcome and vanquish and entirely subjugate, otherwise we never can be saved. But in order to gain this desirable victory, we look in vain for the necessary help from our poor, frail human nature. It would be as useless to trust to its efficiency as to try to sustain a falling tower by a broken reed or to cross the ocean gulf in a frail canoe. By ourselves, therefore, we can do nothing and what is more without the assistance of divine grace we are unable to keep the commandments. What conclusion, therefore, are we to come to. The salvation of our souls is a thing, which, as reason and revelation teach us, outstrips everything else in importance and the gaining of which our best interests unconditionally demand; and yet such is our innate weakness, such our proclivity to evil, that no effort of ours can enable us to effect our purpose. This perhaps looks like a bad case for us. Is God, then, a tyrant to exact from us what we cannot give, to create us and leave us in the necessity of being saved without the power of doing so. Is it in accordance with His divine justice to require us to practice virtues of which we are incapable and to avoid vices to which our corrupt nature is inevitably dragging us. The answer indeed is plain: God requires of us nothing beyond our strength and according to His own divine words "His yoke is sweet and His burden light." If, therefore, we are naturally weak, He does not abandon us to our weakness, but gives us His grace abundantly. He places at our disposal a most stupendous power which, if we will only use, everything must yield to our wishes. That power is prayer.

"Petite et accipietis." "Ask and you shall receive." When we get anything we want from God for the mere asking, we may certainly be very rich in His blessings, if we only so desire. From prayer we can obtain energy to accomplish any task, strength to enable us to surmount any difficulty, so that if we lose the battle, if we are not saved, no one but ourselves is to be blamed, the fault is our own. If we are then subject to vices whose very magnitude is such that we make up our minds that heaven is not for us, and determine to continue unconcernedly our march to destruction, it is because we do not pray; if we are the slavish victims of habits that not only portend an unhappy eternity hereafter, but even in this life bring ruin and misery on ourselves and our families, it is because we do not pray; if we are not saints, if we have not those beautiful virtues that shone so brightly in the many holy men and women whose names are now recorded indelibly on the calendar of God's holy love, it is because we do not pray; finally if men die and are damned every day, it is because *they do not pray.* To confirm what I say and show the conspicuous part prayer must take in the matter of our salvation we need but review the pages of holy writ. "We ought always to pray." "Pray without ceasing." "Pray that you enter not into temptation." Such are the lessons that we are there taught, such are the counsels of divine wisdom directing us to eternal life.

The same Holy Spirit that inspired these words, filling the hearts and guiding the pens of sacred writers, makes them speak most emphatically on the importance of prayer. "Show me," writes St. Jerome, "show me the man who has no need of grace and I will show you a man who has no need of prayer." According to St. Jerome, therefore, if we need the grace

of God we must pray for it. St. Augustine tells us that prayer is to the soul what material food is to the body which unless nurtured and sustained by proper nourishment soon decays and dies. And St. Chrysostom compares a soul without prayer to a corpse that emits a most offensive stench and is the prey of worms. The words of the great St. Thomas, the angel of the schools, are even stronger. "After baptism," says he, "a man has need of continual prayer if he wishes to enter heaven." He insists not only on prayer but unceasing prayer, as the condition of our salvation.

As then this doctrine of the absolute necessity of prayer for all men admits of no exception, we have to conclude that there are two kinds of people who must pray if they would be saved: Those, namely, who are in sin and those who are in God's holy grace, sinners and saints. When a man has once turned away from God by committing a mortal sin, that man ceases to live. He is dead, and he has of himself no more power of returning to the state of innocence than a corpse has of rising out of its grave. He is perfectly helpless, and if he ever lives again, it is God who must come and revivify him, and it would require a greater miracle to restore that soul to the life of grace than to create a new world. Lazarus would have continued to rot and putrefy were it only a question of his own inherent power, and if He had not interfered who was able to give efficacy to the command, "Lazare, veni foras," "Lazarus come forth." But what the sinner cannot accomplish by his own power, he can obtain by prayer. "No one goes to Jesus Christ," says St. Augustine, "unless drawn by divine grace." "Nemo venit nisi tractus." "But you tell me, you are not drawn." Nondum traheris? Pray and you will obtain the grace to be drawn. Ora

ut traharis. Make use then of the grace which you have, the grace of prayer, and you will soon obtain the grace which you have not. Pray, and no matter how great or numerous may be your sins, they will be pardoned; no matter how obstinate and long standing your evil habits they will be overcome; no matter how desperate your case, you will be restored to the friendship of your Maker.

Now the necessity of prayer to recover the grace of God when lost is not more urgent than to retain it when obtained. If then you have reason to believe that your sins are forgiven and that you are in the friendship of God you must pray, if you wish to continue in that happy state. Prayer is the nourisher of piety and the strengthener of virtue. The saints prayed continually, and it was prayer that made them saints and caused them to shine as sublime models of perfection. If at any time they had ceased to pray, they would have become most conspicuous monuments of human frailty and weakness. The great St. Peter is a notable example of this. Trusting to his ardent love of Jesus Christ from whom he imagined nothing could separate him, he neglected to pray, he neglected to ask the aid of the Almighty to preserve in him those good dispositions; and the consequence was that he fell most shamefully. He denied his best friend, he denied his Lord and Master and denied him three distinct times. "Non novi hom inem. I do not know the man." You have the same poor, weak human nature that St. Peter had and are not a whit stronger than he. If you have the grace of God, then you must be determined to keep it, and you must have recourse to the only means of preserving it. To possess it now, and then lose it and go to hell would be a poor consolation to you during an unending eternity. It is

not the person who has found the grace of God that will be crowned, but he who perseveres in it until death. Perseverance, therefore, is the most desirable and most important blessing one in the state of grace can hope for, and yet, desirable and important as it may be, no degree of sanctity can merit and secure it. The most unsullied purity of the virgins, the most austere penances of the hermits, the burning zeal of the apostles, the agonies and excruciating sufferings of the martyrs can lay no claim to it. It is a pure gift of God, and can only be obtained by humble prayer. "Nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem, frustra vigilat qui custodit eam. Unless the Lord guard the city, in vain does he watch who guards it." In conclusion, I will briefly sum up what I have already said. Salvation is the only all-important thing for us. Everything else may be dispensed with or lost; salvation must brook no chances, it must be absolutely acquired. As it is only by prayer that this end may be gained, it follows that prayer is absolutely necessary for all men whether they be in sin or the grace of God. Since, then, prayer is so important a duty for us all, let us attend more diligently to it hereafter, and that we may succeed in carrying out this good resolution let us beseech the Holy Ghost to continually enlighten our minds, that we may know what to ask, and that He may move our wills to ask it with fervor and perseverance.

Sanctifying Grace.

"For you are the temple of the living God.—*II Cor. vi: 16.*

The most marvelous manifestation of the goodness of God towards our humanity is undoubtedly to be found

in sanctifying, or as it is sometimes called, habitual grace. A knowledge of its nature and effects cannot fail to stimulate us to the most earnest efforts in guarding it when present or striving after it when lost. By theologians it is defined to be a supernatural gift of God inhering intrinsically in the soul as a habit, sanctifying it and disposing it for eternal life. In this definition the word supernatural shows, that its conception does not at all enter into the number of those things which constitute our being and that it is something, extraneous, superadded to our nature. It is called a "gift," because it comes from the pure liberality of our Maker and a "gift of God," to show that it is not the Holy Ghost or any person of the Godhead but something really distinct from the divinity. It is said "to inhere intrinsically in the soul" in refutation of the errors of Luther and Calvin who maintained that God in sanctifying a soul does not free it from sin, but leaving it in all its hideous deformity, changes it only externally by covering it around about as with a cloak, by the justice of Christ. It is called a habit to designate it as something stable and permanent, and not of a transitory character like actual grace which comes only for some specific time and action. The rest of the definition explains itself. This great gift is always conferred with the waters of holy baptism, unless in the case of an adult the proper dispositions are wanting, and it works such an astounding transformation in the soul of the recipient that it changes that soul, without destroying its personality, into a being of a superior order, a "nova creatura," an entirely new creation. If we could gaze in upon the substance of our own souls and see ourselves before and after being invested with this gift, we should scarcely be able to believe in our

own identity. When clothed with sanctifying grace, we seem to have put away the poverty, the weakness and the insignificance of a created being and to have assumed into our own individuality, the very substance of the divinity according to the words of St. Peter: "Divinæ consortes naturæ," being made sharers in the very nature of God himself. You all know the characteristics of iron. It is naturally hard and inflexible, black and cold. Place it in the fire for a few moments and witness how different it becomes. It is like another substance; it is soft and pliable, and glows brightly. This action of heat on the substance of iron may give us some faint idea of the change effected in our soul by Divine grace. A soul, therefore, clothed in grace becomes in some inscrutable manner invested with the very Divinity itself. You remember that when Adam in attempting to become like God, knowing good and evil, fell most disgracefully from glory and happiness into wretchedness and misery, how the three persons of the Blessed Trinity are represented as speaking of him in derision saying, "Behold! Adam is become as one of us." But when They now look upon a soul arrayed in Divine grace They say the self-same words, not indeed in derision, but in all the reality of the words' meaning, behold that soul has become as one of us. It is plain, therefore, that by the action of grace we become deified, and are not at all astonished at the words which the Almighty addresses to us, "Ego dixi, Dii estis. I have said you are Gods."

The knowledge of the exalted dignity thus conferred on man by divine grace leads us first to believe that the religion of the ancient Pagans was not, perhaps, so absurd as it might at first appear, and that it was only a distorted ray of truth which caused them to give

divine honor to their emperors, generals, and great men whom they placed among the gods on the heights of Olympus, and it leads us secondly to understand the cause of the power attributed to good works done by a person in the grace of God. Thus a little prayer, a kind advice, the smallest act of penance, a trifling alms, merit a supernatural, yea I might say, an infinite reward, not because their nature demands it, but because they were performed by a person sharing the nature of the infinite God, Himself.

Now, by establishing this intimate union between us and the Divinity, grace necessarily effects a near relationship between us and each particular member of the Holy Trinity. In the first place it makes us the adopted sons of the Eternal Father, "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear, but you have received the spirit of the adoption of sons whereby we cry, 'Abba,' Father." "For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God, (Rom. VIII : 15.) Now this adoption is not a mere idea or conventional formality such as exists in human society between children and those who adopt them, but it is a relationship that has as real a basis as the kinship existing between parents and their natural offspring. Just as Jesus Christ is the son of God by nature, so we are His sons by adoption. "Behold," says St. John, "what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called and should be the sons of God. (I. Epist. iii: 1.) Hence, it is with all truth we can raise our voices to God, and say: "Our Father who art in Heaven." From the sublime dignity of being sons of God, it follows that we are heirs likewise. As every son is heir to his father's estate so we are the legitimate heirs of Almighty God.

"Quod si filii, et hæredes." (Rom. viii: 17.) What are we heirs to? To nothing less than a kingdom, and it is on this account we daily say, "Thy kingdom come." If we are heirs to a kingdom, then we are princes, every one of us. We may not be recognized as such, for we are away from home, in a foreign land, and traveling incognito, nevertheless we belong to a royal race and have royal blood flowing in our veins, and our true character will, please God, be made manifest at the proper time. Now, my brethren, the fact that we are the sons of God, and princes and heirs to the kingdom of Heaven, should lead us to form a just appreciation of our matchless dignity, and induce us to do nothing unworthy of it. The choicest honors, the most valuable preferments, the most eagerly sought positions in this world are all as something vile and low compared with the supreme grandeur of our position as sons of God. No principality, no amount of wealth nor all the combined influence of men could confer a dignity in any way equal to it. When therefore we see people rolling in wealth and luxury and flattered and favored by this world, we should refrain from envying them their honors or wealth; for our position is as far superior to theirs as the heavens are above the earth; and the treasures that are awaiting us after a short pilgrimage are so great that it is impossible for the mind of man to comprehend their magnitude. To this contempt for the honors or the riches of this world, we should add a profound disgust for the filthy and degrading pleasures of the flesh, and so lead lives becoming us as the sons of God, lives that will do honor to our Eternal Father, holy, pure and saintly lives that will prepare us for our Kingdom hereafter. Sanctifying grace in the second place connects us most intimately with Jesus

Christ. In giving us the sonship of God, it necessarily makes us the brothers of Jesus Christ. Hence the Apostle calls Him, "Primogenitus in multis fratribus." (Rom. viii: 29), "The first born of many brethern." And even Jesus Christ Himself does not disdain to call us His brothers in the psalm alluded to by St. Paul. "Nuntiabo nomen tuum fratribus meis et in medio Ecclesiæ laudabo te." Ps. xxiii: 21. "I will announce Thy name to my brothers and in the midst of the Church I will praise Thee." But there is even a yet more intimate relationship existing between us and Jesus Christ than brotherhood. "Vos autem," says the Apostle, "estis Corpus Christi et membra de membro. (I Cor. xii: 27.) "But you are the body of Christ and members of member." The Church is the body of Christ and He is its head. This is so true that, when Saul who was persecuting the Church was struck down from his horse, he heard our Lord saying to him, "Quid me persequeris?" "Why dost thou persecute Me." He did not say: Why do you persecute My Church, but why do you persecute Me. Every one then who is baptized and receives sanctifying grace puts on the Lord Jesus Christ and becomes a member of His body. Now this union which binds us as members of this mystic body to Him as its head is far closer than the union existing between the members of any material body. These members although united together are not one in the other, but entirely separate; while the union existing between us and Jesus Christ causes Him to be in us and we in Him. This might seem incredible if Christ himself had not said, "in that day you shall know that I am in Father and you in Me and I in you." (John xiv.) When we consider our intimate relationship with Jesus Christ we cannot but feel humili-

ated at the outrages we have been heaping on Him since we came to the use of reason. Instead of feeling an honorable pride at being united by brotherhood with so glorious a personage, instead of loving Him with that true affection which one brother should bear to another, we have hated and despised Him, we have turned our backs upon Him and would have, if it had been in our power, destroyed His very life. It was indeed the very essence of cruelty to treat our brother so. Nor was our conduct towards Him as head of that body to which we belong less reprehensible. When we should have tried to assimilate ourselves to Him in every particular and conform ourselves more and more to Him, we have on the contrary endeavored to obliterate from our souls every vestige of His likeness and make them reflect the image of our worst enemy, the devil. But with God's help things shall be different hereafter. We will try to return to Him the same affection and love which He has ever shown to us, and we will try to live as He lived, hating what He hated and loving what He loved. In this manner we will act as becomes brothers of Jesus Christ and members of His holy body.

In the third place sanctifying grace allies us with the Holy Ghost who not only comes down and takes possession of our souls but uses our very bodies, as His temple. "An nescitis quoniam membra vestra templum sunt Spiritus sancti?" (1 Cor. vi: 19.) "Do you not know that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost?" Just then as a Church which is the habitation of Jesus Christ is consecrated and anointed with oil, so the body, the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit is likewise consecrated and anointed, first by holy baptism and again by the Sacrament of Confirmation.

This relation of ours to the Holy Spirit accounts for the great honor which the Church accords to the relics of the saints, and which we pay to the bodies of all Christians who depart this life in the grace of God.

To sum up then what I have said, the preëminently grand gift brought us by our Redeemer is sanctifying grace. This is the superb nuptial garment with which, when we are clothed, God welcomes us and folds us with love to His bosom. It is this which makes us partakers of His very being. By it we become not only in name, but in very deed, the sons of God and consequently the heirs to His Kingdom, the brothers of Jesus Christ, and temples of the Holy Ghost. This beautiful and royal garment we first received in baptism. How often since then have we in a sort of diabolical frenzy torn it into shreds and flung it from us as if it were a leprous rag, thereby renouncing all the privileges it conferred upon us. This thought should awaken in us a most overwhelming sadness. How rich we were with it, how poor without it.

As nobody can be infallibly sure whether he is an object of love or hatred, so no one can say with the certainty of faith whether he is in possession of this gift or not. We may, however, be sure we are not, if we are living in sin or have not repented of our past transgressions. In order therefore that we may have solid grounds to trust that our souls are clad in this lovely garment and are enjoying all the prerogatives it confers, let us try to lead holy lives, let us hate sin and cultivate an abiding spirit of contrition. "Asperges me, Domine, hysopo et mundabor, lavabis me et super nivem dealbabor."

The Unknown God.

"Verily thou art a hidden God."

—Is. xlv : 15.

When the fame of the austere life and the successful preaching of the Baptist had spread throughout Jerusalem and filled every one with wonder, a deputation of Priests and Levites was sent to him to enquire if he were the Messiah. He replied that he was not, and at the same time declared to them that there stood in their midst one whom they knew not, meaning Jesus the Saviour whose precursor the Baptist was. "Medius autem vestrum stetit quem vos nescitis." "In the midst of you hath stood one whom you do not know."(John i : 26.) Our Lord at the time of this event had been many years upon earth living and conversing with men. He had mingled in the bands which yearly left their quiet homes in Nazareth to go up to adore at Jerusalem. He had been pressed by the throng of worshippers that surrounded the altar of sacrifice. He had sat among the doctors in the temple and passed through the crowded streets of the great Jewish metropolis, and yet, as St. John said, no one knew Him to be what He was, no one discerned His real character. But who will say that the world has improved in the lapse of time and that it is now any better than it was then, as regards the knowledge of Jesus. Among the many millions of human beings spread over the face of the earth, count the small minority who are blessed with the gift of faith ; and of those whom the Church recognizes as her own, to how many could be applied the words which the Baptist formerly addressed to the

Jewish delegation? Jesus is in the midst of us, and still I must say it, Catholics do not know Him. They believe, it is true, that He is on our altars, but this belief is a strange one. It would seem as if the feeble powers of their intellect, overwhelmed by the greatness of this mystery which they so firmly believe, were inclining them practically to look upon it as an unreality. Their belief is firm but inactive, and lacks that vivid realization which ought to make it satisfy their spiritual wants to the end of life. It may be compared to a noble tree which has struck its roots deep down into the earth, and grown up strong and firm, but which for want of the hand to nurse it, yields not the fruit which should reasonably be expected of it. Catholics indeed for the most part are much like the unprofitable servant in the gospel, who took his master's talent and folding it up in a napkin hid it under the earth; for faith is a talent given us by our Lord, which He expects us to make use of, and not allow to lie uselessly in some corner of our hearts. Hence to make our faith more practical on this point, we must often consider the nature of this holy sacrament and try with God's grace to shape our lives according to our belief. What else then is the Blessed Eucharist but Jesus living among us, not indeed as He appeared during the thirty-three years of His visible life, but concealed from our sight in the hidden recesses of His charity. Our imagination carries us through the closed doors of the Tabernacle and no visions of the divinity break upon our view, although Jesus is there in all the majesty of His Godhead, and there are glories radiating from that little ciborium, which without the special intervention of God we could not look upon and not be annihilated by their splendor. Amid the silence

of the place no sound breaks upon our ear, and yet myriads of angels are around us singing ecstatic songs of praise and exerting all the energies of their wonderful natures in humble worship of their sacramental Lord. We discern nothing to remind us of that loveliness and of that beauty of holiness which beamed from His countenance as He journeyed through the land of Palestine. We perceive no lineaments of that face, the sight of which was once sufficient to calm the troubled souls of those who gazed upon it. In a word, we see no traces of His human form, and still we know He is there, there with all the wondrous realties of His divine and human natures. "Vere tu es deus absconditus, deus Israel, Salvator." Truly, thou art a hidden God, the God of Israel, the Saviour. (Is. xlv : 15.) "Behold," says the spouse in the Canticles (11 : 9.), "He stands behind our wall looking through the windows, looking through the lattices." The wall behind which Jesus is standing and the windows and lattices through which He is gazing on our souls are none other than the sacramental species. These obstruct our sight and hide Him from our view, and it is therefore no wonder if we do not see Him, but they should never be able to make us forget and much less abuse and ill-treat Him whom they conceal. Such would not be our conduct towards a friend whom we tenderly loved and who loved us in return with undying affection, if such a friend were shut out from our company and for our sakes locked up in some narrow cell. The activity of love would ever be directing our thoughts to the place of his confinement, and our efforts would be unceasing to procure for him whatever consolation the ingenuity of a loving heart could devise and our circumstances could permit. It is thus we would act towards an earthly friend, even

though we could not see him. Only in the case of Jesus, the nearest of relatives, the best of friends, and the most generous of benefactors, our hearts seem destitute of all noble and beneficent impulses. That God should remain thus for our sakes here on earth, is a revelation of His goodness that no created intellect could have imagined; and that we should make so little of His stay among us would seem an impossibility, if it were not a fact. How many think of Him during the six days of the week devoted to labor? Anything but Jesus has then a charm to occupy the time or the minds of men." "Extraneus factus sum fratribus meis et peregrinus filiis matris meæ." (Ps. lxviii: 9.) "I am become a stranger to my brethern and an alien to the sons of my mother." Yes, Jesus is a stranger among His own friends; no one seems to know Him or care for Him. "My delights," says He, "are to be with the children of men," and, strange to say, these same children of men appear to shun His company. Sundays and festivals are not looked for as presenting opportunities to come into His presence and to kneel before the tabernacle, but rather as affording occasions to lounge listlessly about, or to go to Church in order to see and to criticize or to indulge a puny vanity in the display of some article of dress. Surely we act as if Jesus were not on our altars. We are like the Jews of old: Jesus is standing in the midst of us and we know Him not. If some mighty ruler whose will all men obeyed, whose power only the confines of creation limited, whose treasures far surpassed all the true and fabled riches of Eastern magnificence and were equalled only by the nobleness and generosity of his own great heart, so that to judge from his actions he would seem to have been created solely for the

benefit and the admiration of his followers—if such a being, I say, should visit one of our cities, it is easy to conceive how he would be treated. His name would be the all-absorbing topic of the day. His great deeds, his services to humanity, his generosity would be spoken of and applauded over and over again. His affability and condescension would astonish every one, whilst the halls of his mansion would be continually crowded by those who were courting his favor or whom gratitude led to pay a tribute of respect to their benefactor. But see the inconsistency of men. Jesus is greater than any such imaginary leader ever could be, and His power, His wealth, and His goodness—goodness to us in the past, goodness to us in the present and the goodness which He has in store for us in the future—all so far exceed our feeble comprehension that they cannot be fathomed even by the deep discernment of an angel's intelligence. And yet not only is the prayer of thanksgiving hardly ever offered to Him for favors past or present, but that self-seeking, egotistical avarice which now-a-days has such power of action on men's souls turns blindly away from Him, the fountain where alone and truly it might be satisfied. From morning till night and from night again till morning He waits patiently there in that humble abode, longing that we should come and make ourselves partakers of His gifts. "All you that thirst come to the waters, and you that have no money make haste buy and eat; come ye, buy wine and milk without money and without any price." (Is. lv: 1.)

Let us then stir up our faith and respond in some measure to these loving calls of our Saviour and when occasions offer, let us seek His company, for a few moments at least, before the tabernacle. And as we

kneel there in His presence, after having thanked Him for His past goodness towards us, let us ask Him for the more substantial blessings of grace, those namely that concern the soul, its present and its future welfare, being assured that, in this case, He Himself will take care of our temporal welfare according to His promise. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice and all these things shall be added unto you." (St. Matt. vi: 33.) We should then ask Him for a knowledge of Himself and His loveliness and the grace always to submit with readiness to His holy will, as it is continually directing all things for our good. We should implore Him to imprint on our souls a thorough, sensible conviction of our own nothingness, and to bestow on us the light to know the benefits which He has heaped upon us; to know our sins, their number and deformity, and beg of Him to penetrate us with an ever-abiding sorrow for having committed them. And lastly we should beseech Him to confer on us the gift of prayer, of humble, frequent and fervent prayer, the grace ever to confide in Him, mistrust ourselves and to understand and despise the fleeting vanities of this world. Such petitions as these we might all well make, but there are wants which may vary with individual souls. Some perhaps there may be who are the wretched slaves of some degrading passion which rules them most tyrannically, gives them no peace here, and promises them none hereafter; and they think they will never be able to shake off its shackles, as if that same Jesus who cast the seven devils out of Magdalen and made her a saint were not here on our altar able and ready to assist us at our call. There may be others who would wish to be friends of God, but who find a seemingly insurmountable obstacle in the way; perhaps it is the great

difficulty which they have in revealing some sin in confession on account of shame, or a secret pride ; perhaps it is a deep hatred of some fellow being for whom Christ died, and whom they cannot forgive. Why not in such cases remember Jesus in the tabernacle, and go there before Him and breathe an earnest prayer for grace and strength to do what is right? and then every difficulty will vanish like smoke before the wind. At the foot of the altar can be found a remedy for every evil, assistance in every trouble. There, parents who are charged with the care of a family can draw down blessings on their own and their children's heads and obtain the grace to train them up in piety and make them objects of love both to God and man. There, husbands and wives who are at variance and who, instead of being to each other a comfort and a support as they should be, have become mutual tormentors, can imbibe a spirit of peace and learn to live in perfect harmony with each other. There, young men who are tossed about by a selfish world and young women, alone perhaps and friendless, whose circumstances are hard indeed and trying, can find a friend who will not desert them in the hour of need. There poverty can be succored and sickness driven away, or patience and resignation acquired to bear their inconveniences with tranquillity, should God wish them to remain for our greater good. St. Ambrose says, "We have all things, in Christ. If you desire the cure of a wound, He is a physician; if you are suffering from a burning fever, He is a fountain ; if you are weighed down with iniquity, He is a justice; if you need help, He is strength ; if you fear death, He is life; if you desire heaven, He is the way ; if you fly darkness, He is light ; if you seek food, He is nourishment." (De Virg. C. xvi.) Jesus has promised to give us every-

thing we ask; He has reserved nothing. "Ask and you shall receive," says He, "that your joy may be full." This abounding goodness of Jesus towards us in the Blessed Sacrament is well expressed by the words of the psalmist: "Inebriabuntur ab ubertate domus tuæ." "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house." If the many prophets and kings who desired to see the day when Jesus would dwell among men had seen it, who can tell how they might have been benefited, but what God has refused to others He has granted to us. What then should be our efforts to cultivate so great a grace, what the measure of our gratitude, what our joy at being honored with so grand a favor! "Exulta et lauda, habitatio Sion, quia magnus in medio tuo, Sanctus Israel." Rejoice and praise, O thou habitation of Sion, for great is He that is in the midst of thee, the holy one of Israel. (Is. xii: 6.)

If then, up to this time we have not treated Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament as we should have done, but have passed Him by as one we knew not, and paid no attention to His kind invitations, let us while we regret the past, determine that our future conduct towards Him shall prove to the world the sincerity of our belief. Let us learn to think of Him more frequently, and when we see or pass by one of His Churches, to remember how He is remaining there within it for our sakes; and if time or circumstances prevent us from paying Him the homage of a little visit, let a passing prayer or a sigh of love supply its place. Let us always enter the Church where He is with the greatest respect and recollection, and while there keep before our eyes Him whose presence we are in; and as we kneel before Him employ our time in petitions for favors and in fervent aspirations. Every day we should pray for a continu-

ally increasing devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and try as far as we are able to honor it as it deserves. We may ask our good Mother Mary to help us, and she will look on us with pleasure and second our efforts. We shall then please God during life, and store up blessings for ourselves hereafter ; and we may confidently trust that when the hour of death shall arrive, we shall be fortified for our transition to another world by this heavenly food. May our last breath be an act of divine love, and our last words the sweet names of Jesus and Mary !

The King's Return.

"His eyes shall see the King in his beauty."

—*Is. xxxiii : 17.*

We have no authentic description of the Garden of Eden. In the holy Scriptures it is called simply "hortus deliciarum," a garden of delights. It was created by God to be the lovely abode of innocence and purity, and we can never therefore, in the farthest stretches of our imagination, attain to the realization of its beauty. It possessed every variety of charming scenery. Tall, verdure-clad mountains cast their great shadows over the most fertile of plains; rivers like streams of melted crystal flowed between banks of flowers and meandered through sweet-scented meadows and around the foot of comely hills, and perhaps, leaping over some vast precipice, formed a cataract of romantic and bewildering grandeur. Lakes set here and there reflected in their tranquil depths the

sylvan glories that surrounded them, and the silvery clouds that floated above, whilst the waves of rippling glass that played upon their bosom were never put in motion by a ruder blast than the gentle zephyrs of spring. On the borders of these lakes and along the banks of these rivers were groves of trees in unlimited variety, and around their trunks were all manner of creeping vines which found their way up among the boughs and hung in graceful festoons from tree to tree; and all this loveliness was intensified by the transparent purity of the air and the deep serenity of the azure sky. These woody retreats were also made resonant with the songs and chirpings of all sorts of birds that were ever flitting from branch to branch; the golden flamingo, the red-breasted robin, the little humming bird, like an animated particle of the rainbow, with a thousand other varities of the feathery race all of which vied with each other in the color of their plumage and the sweetness of their song. Above every pathway hung branches weighted down by fruits of every variety and of the most tempting delicacy. Every breeze that blew came loaded down with the aromatic fragrance of the woods and innumerable flowers. Over this enchanted place Adam was appointed the supreme lord and master, and to him were subjected all other animated beings. He summoned the fishes of the sea, and they hastened to the shore to listen to his command. He beckoned to the kingly eagle which with outstretched pinions was sailing majestically through the air, and he instantly bent his flight to the earth, whilst the lion roaring in the forest and shaking his shaggy mane in the pride of his strength, acknowledged his authority, and came and crouched at his feet.

Such is a faint description of the created glories of this terrestrial paradise. It possessed, however, another charm before which every earthly beauty paled and grew dim, and that was the ever-abiding presence of God, who walked in the Garden in the evening air and held sweet converse with our first parents. The light of His countenance shone upon their faces and awoke in their hearts a torrent of indescribable bliss. There seemed to be nothing that could augment their happiness. But alas! A terrible catastrophe was at hand: Sin was committed, and in an instant every thing was changed. The fruit rotted on the trees, the verdure departed from the fields, the earth became barren, and the skies were overcast with dark, threatening clouds. Even the birds and the animals lost their gentleness, and in their consternation fled away from their former master, and in the wake of all these evils followed sickness and death. But the greatest of all the evils which sin brought with it was the cessation of the visible presence of God. Other evils man could bear, but this was actually intolerable. Without God he could hardly live, and he walked the earth with a broken, shattered existence, as if he were only a part of himself. His heart was made for God, and although that heart was small and limited, only the unlimited God could fill it. Hence it is that in his craving after God he would search for Him up and down through the highways and byways of nature. He walks out into the pleasant sunshine to gaze on the remnant of beauty which nature still retains in spite of original sin. His pathway is hedged in with multitudinous flowers, the air is sweet with the smell of the rose, and the birds are making merry with their

cheerful song. All things seem bright and beautiful, and in them he thinks he catches a glimpse of the loveliness and the glory of their Maker. He goes up to the tall cliffs that overhang the boundless ocean. The winds are lashing the waters into the wildest commotion, and waves mount higher and higher and rage and dash one against the other like giants contending for the mastery. In the wildness of this marvelous spectacle, filled with a solemn awe he thinks he can reach out his hand and place it upon the omnipotence and power of God. He looks up into the vast firmament above him. There countless orbs, some of which are thousands of times larger than this earth of ours, pursue in quiet and order their well determined courses. He goes, in imagination, from one to the other until he seems to stand on the very brink of creation, and still he can see away off in the unexplored regions of space other worlds and planetary systems whose numbers defy his power of calculation. So great is the effort required to grasp the whole extent of this scene that he feels his brain staggering and his reason almost ready to lose its balance, and he persuades himself that he is taking in the immensity of God. And now a small speck of a cloud appears on the horizon. It grows larger and larger and soon covers the whole sky with its sable drapery. Large, livid streaks of lightning flash across the firmament with blinding brilliancy, and are followed by peals of thunder that send their echoes through the vaulted sky, like the report of some mighty battery of celestial artillery. As the storm continues to rage with unabated fury, he imagines that he perceives a little of that soul-subduing majesty that surrounds the throne of the Eternal. In all these various circum-

stances, it is not the blessed God Himself nor even one of His essential attributes, but only the shadow of what he longs for that he has discovered. Hence the tearful longing of his heart continues and will not be subdued. "Inquietum est cor meum donec requiescat in te." "My heart will not be quiet till it rest in thee." And though in answer to this uncontrollable craving after God, He had promised to come Himself and save mankind, yet we find that this promise instead of producing contentment and peace only intensified the more the already burning desire to see God. On its bended knees and with outstretched hands humanity prayed with a loud and earnest voice in the words of Holy Writ: "Rorate coeli desuper et nubes pluant justum," drop down dew, ye heavens, from above and let the clouds rain the just one; "aperiatur terra et germinet salvatorem," let the earth be opened and bud forth the Saviour.—Is. XLV.

To appease in some measure this gnawing hunger of man's soul and to comfort his lonely and disconsolate heart, God would every now and then send Prophets and holy men to announce some circumstance or other relating to His coming.

The venerable Jacob is about to die, and his twelve stalwart sons stand around his bedside to receive his last advice and blessing. "Gather yourselves together," says he, "that I may tell you the things that shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together and hear, O ye sons of Jacob; harken to Israel your father." He then goes on to tell them among other things, of the time fixed for the coming of the Messias. "Non au feretur sceptrum de Juda aut dux de femore ejus donec veniat qui mittendus est, et ipse erit expectatio gentium." "The scepter shall not be

taken away from Juda nor a ruler from his thigh till He come that is to be sent, and He will be the expectation of the nations." Afterwards the great Daniel appears and specifies the exact time of the Saviour's advent which will be "after seventy weeks of years" computed from the return of the captive Jews. "Septuaginta hebdomades abbreviatæ sunt super populum tuum et super urbem sanctam tuam." "Seventy weeks are shortened upon the people and upon thy holy city." In his eagle-eyed vision Isaias perceives the glories of the Virgin Mother, and announces them to an astonished people. "Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium et vocabitur nomen ejus Emanuel." "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His name shall be called Emanuel." Another prophet points out clearly and distinctly the place of the Saviour's birth. "Et tu Bethlehem terra Judæ nequaquam minima es in principibus Judæ. Ex te enim exiet dux qui regat populum meum Israel." "And thou, Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come forth the Captain that shall rule my people Israel." And finally there appears on the banks of the Jordan the immediate precursor of Christ, John the Baptist, of whom it was written, "A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough ways plain; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." (St. Luke iii: 4.) According to Pagan testimony all mankind was at this time in expectation of the coming of the Promised One. The nations were eagerly looking here and there and watching for every rumor that would tell them

something of Him whom they expected. These hopes were not to be frustrated, and John enlightened by a divine inspiration is able to point out to his hearers the Word made flesh. "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world." God Himself had come to dwell among us. He had come to walk again on the same earth from which He had been banished, and to converse with the sons of those who had rebelled against Him. One would naturally think that His advent would be the sole absorbing topic of the day, that it would cause a general jubilee over the entire earth, that crowds would be gathering in from every quarter and people crushing one another almost to death to catch but a glimpse of the Divine Visitor, that men would forget to eat their bread in the ecstasy of joy that enraptured them. But it is sad to say that things were quite different. "He came to His own and His own received Him not." They absolutely refused to recognize Him ; they turned their backs upon Him ; they insulted and abused Him. We perhaps are astonished that such should be the case. We try to find reasons for conduct that to us is inexplicable, and we say to ourselves that if we had been living in those times we would not have acted as other men. But unfortunately whilst we are revolving such thoughts in our minds we are acting precisely as those Jews of old. Jesus is here in our midst and we know Him not. He is here in this tabernacle seated like a king on His throne, and He never leaves it either through the lonesome watches of the night, or through the long, long hours of the day. He is here with all the glorious qualities of His divinity, all the high prerogatives of His humanity, and all the tender passions of His human heart. "Come to me," He says, "all you who labor

and are burthened and I will refresh you." And not only does He wait here patiently to feed every hungry soul, to cure every afflicted spirit, to soothe every aching brow, to bind up every wounded limb and to remedy the thousand ills of poor humanity, but out from that humble abode flows unceasingly, like the waters of some rushing, impetuous stream, a flood of celestial graces. These graces seek us out everywhere and at all times, and almost overwhelm us with their very magnitude. They surround us in our homes, they meet us at our doors. They accompany us on the street, they pursue us on our journeys, they protect us during the day from many a danger and many a sin, and they hover around our beds at night. We shall never be able to tell, before we are admitted to the vision of God, what we owe to the sacramental presence of Jesus Christ among us. It is indeed too bad that we should forget these things, but it is worse that we should be acting as if we had lost our faith, and refused to believe what the Church teaches about this astounding mystery. We see a Church at a distance and we never think of the dear prisoner who is held bound there beneath its roof. We pass by the door of the sacred edifice and we do not raise our hats or show any sign of reverence, for no thought of Jesus comes to our mind. We never enter the Church during week days to spend a few moments before the tabernacle, and when Sunday comes and custom brings us to the house of God to hear Holy Mass, our minds instead of being wrapt in devotion or intent on eliciting acts of faith, hope and charity, strays away off to the most indifferent subjects. It is perhaps, occupied with thoughts of vanity about our personal appearance or with criticisms on the dress

and behavior of those about us, or with schemes and plans of worldly aggrandizement. When I therefore say that we appear to have lost our faith in the truth of the real presence, you can easily see that my assertion is not far from the truth. The evil, however, does not stop here. Our irreligion carries us even much further. By our sins we add the most stinging outrages to our already badly insulted Redeemer. Were a friend full of love and regard for us to come from some distant country, not only to satisfy the longing of his heart by being in our company, but also to confer on us the most substantial benefits, raising us from the position of abject beggars to the highest pinnacle of wealth and power in the land, would it not be, to say the least, the very height of cruelty and atrocious, wicked ingratitude, not only to receive him unkindly, but especially to treat him as our worst enemy? And yet such has been our relation with Jesus Christ, for whom the name of friend, which in itself implies so much, does not begin at all to express his relation, his feeling and his many acts of goodness towards us. No human being ever persecuted a fellow creature with such persistent cruelty as we have shown to our Blessed Lord by our daily sins, sins of omission, sins of commission, sins of thought, word and deed.

Let us then be ashamed of ourselves and let this shame work a salutary change in our lives. Let us abandon all evil habits, let us give up sin of every description and begin now at last to lead good, virtuous Christian lives. And then too let us not forget, as we have hitherto done, our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, let us think of Him often and whenever an occasion may offer, let us steal away from our homes and go to the Church to spend some moments in sweet contem-

plation and prayer before the holy tabernacle. Let us accustom ourselves now to be happy in the presence and the company of Him with whom we humbly hope to pass a most blissful eternity.

Christmas.

"*For this day is born to you a Savior.*"

St. Luke ii : 11.

Christmas is essentially a festival of kindness. The spirit of the day seems to urge men to overcome the selfishness of their natures, and in imitation of the Babe of Bethlehem, who comes to us to-day loaded down with so many benefits, to pour themselves out as it were in kindness on every one around them. It is hard to give a short, comprehensive definition of kindness. It is however something that needs no definition for we all thoroughly know and appreciate it. How beautiful are its features, how charming its presence, how soothing its influences! It can scarcely be called a thing of earth. It was born among the stars. It is a white-winged angel from heaven, that comes to sweeten the bitter cup of human life and make its draughts more palatable. The tincture of sadness revealed among its elements of joy is to be found in the limitations that man has placed on its missionary capabilities. Kindness does not abound with the prodigality that should be its characteristic. The supply is not equal to the craving, speechless demand of weary, fainting nature. If kindness were permitted to be as

diffusive of itself as circumstances actually urge, this world would in a great measure resemble the Paradise of old before it had been blighted with sin.

It should be our constant and untiring endeavor to cultivate the spirit of kindness, at all times and in all places. With this purpose in view our attention should be directed in the first place to filling and embellishing our minds with kind thoughts. Such is the malicious tendency of our corrupt nature, that this may prove more of a task than at first sight would be imagined. In our minds unkind thoughts hold perhaps a strong and permanent sway; and their propriety or rather their perversity is never called in question. The name alone, it may be, of a certain man excites within us a most bitter rancor. He may be a very excellent man, moral and religious, of regular habits, who never said or did anything to harm us and still we don't like him, and want to have nothing to do with him. Words in his praise are absolutely disagreeable to us, whilst the very mention of anything that would injure him or reflect on his fair fame fills us with a secret joy. This feeling towards him can be traced to no ostensible tangible source, except perhaps to a latent jealousy which our self-deceit will not permit us to acknowledge. There is an involuntary consciousness within us that that man is more virtuous, more learned, and more esteemed than we are, and the thought disturbs our soul. This uncharitableness will sometimes make us go even farther. Every action of that man receives its color from the green spectacles we wear. We ascribe evil and degrading motives for everything he does. In our estimation he is a sly, plotting, double-faced hypocrite, and, under the appearance of a Chris-

tian and a gentleman, he conceals the heart of a detestable villain. And thus our perverse thoughts lead us on from bad to worse, imputing to him intentions and crimes that exist only in our bad and perverse imaginations.

It almost seems needless to undertake to depict to you the wickedness of such thoughts. They are not only unkind, but most unreasonable, and directly contrary to the law of God, who tells us to judge not that we may not be judged. He alone can see the thoughts and the motives of men's actions ; He alone is the judge of hearts and He will allow no one to assume that office. I once knew a holy priest who never seemed to entertain an unkind thought of anyone. He imagined all were saints except himself. This tendency of his mind was such that it gave occasionally annoyance to his penitents who found it difficult to persuade him that they had really committed the sins they confessed. Like that good priest we should ever entertain none but the kindest thoughts of everyone, and this for two reasons. First, because human nature is a great deal better than we are sometimes inclined to believe. It was well said by Shakespeare: "There is some soul of goodness in things evil, would men observingly distil it out." Secondly, because unkind thoughts react in a most revengeful manner on those who cherish them. "Strange thoughts," says Shelly, "beget strange deeds," and, we might add, bad thoughts about others beget bad deeds in ourselves, that is, lead us to commit the self-same sins we impute to our neighbor. We should therefore never allow a suspicious thought into our minds, we should never think ill or unkindly of anyone. If, perchance, a crime is brought to our notice whose com-

mission unimpeachable testimony will not allow us to deny, we must tax all the ingenuity of our souls to find circumstances that will diminish its malice. Among these can be reckoned the strength of the temptation, an unguarded moment, a thoughtless disposition, a violent, ungovernable temper, evil example, or the seductive words of others. Had we been placed in the same circumstances, we should say to ourselves, we might have become greater criminals in the eyes of God than that poor sinner. As it is, it may be that after he had committed that act, he made an act of contrition that wiped out of his soul every vestige of the sin and gave the greatest joy to every angel in the Court of Heaven. If he has not made such an act, he may make it yet. His future life may rival the sorrow and the penances of St. Peter, of the Apostle of the Gentiles, of St. Mary Magdalene and St. Margaret of Cortona. He may yet be a luminous star of sanctity in the Kingdom of God, whilst we, who have such great ideas about ourselves and think so contemptuously of our neighbor, may fall from grace, may wallow in vice, and may wind up a most iniquitous career in the lowest depths of hell. That wise saying should ever be ringing in our ear, "Let him who stands take heed lest he fall." We all have enough to do to correct ourselves, without looking to others for matter to condemn or criticize.

In the second place we should see that our conversation be always tinctured with kindness and that none but kind words ever fall from our lips. Kind words have a power for good that is most magical and effective. Take for instance the case of a man who is swayed by a most violent fit of anger towards us. He will listen to no explanation. He is deter-

mined never to forgive. His rage instead of abating only increases as time goes on. It happens that some one tells him of a kind word that we have said of him. His judgment is staggered; he stops and he thinks. His better nature asserts itself. The dark clouds roll by and the stormy waves of passion subside, and the man that was once our deadly enemy becomes our warmest friend.

Again, there is no one of us who does not know what trouble is. Sorrow has more than once racked our very soul and crushed our aching, bleeding heart under its almost unbearable weight. We now well remember the soothing and the healing we so gratefully experienced on those trying occasions from the kind words of some good friend. The fragrant balm of his well-timed consolation kept our reason from being dethroned, and paved the way to future peace and comfort.

Then, too, just as kind words take off the keen edge of grief, so they dispel the fascination of sin and break the power of temptation. An acquaintance is leading a life of worldliness, of dissipation, of wickedness, perhaps of downright debauchery. The world, the flesh and the devil seem to be too strong for him. They hold him as in a vise so firmly that he thinks he can never shake them off. He is tempted to go on unrestrainedly in his evil course and to abandon the thought of ever returning to Almighty God. A kind word is whispered in his ear, and hope dawns on his soul and strength of purpose is aroused and developed. That word to him is like the spur to the noble steed that flying along his course comes suddenly to some insurmountable barrier, a great high fence perhaps or a wide brambly hedge. He stops and fears to jump. But when the rider applies

the spur, courage and determination brace him up. He draws himself together for the effort and with a mighty bound clears the obstacle and continues his journey. In temptation a kind word strengthens the faltering resolution, and produces results otherwise unattainable. It is impossible to calculate how much kind words have done in annihilating vice, in cultivating virtue, in saving young women from lives of shame and young men from moral sùicide.

In the time of sickness, likewise, kind words always show their ready and unerring power. They seem to take hold of the poor patient with a firm but tender grasp and lift him from all the agonies of complicated bodily ills into an atmosphere of relief, and they spread around his bed of sorrow a mild, sweet fragrance, like exhalations from dewy, fresh-cut roses. No science, no drugs, no medicines can supply the place of kind words in the sick room.

In the third place, we should strive to make our lives one continued, unbroken series of kind actions. Actions are immeasurably superior to thoughts and words. It is not every one who says, "Lord, Lord," will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father. Kind actions have the true ring of the genuine metal; they are the golden coins of God's royal domain. It was in the performance of kind actions that the saints always loved to be engaged. Read the history of St. John Francis Regis. Begging from door to door for the relief of the necessitous, carrying through the public streets bundles of wood or beds of straw to the homes of the poor, waiting on the sick, procuring for them medical aid and dressing their loathsome sores, reconciling those at variance, braving all sorts of storms, cold and snow, and passing over the

most difficult roads to give assistance to the needy—such is an imperfect sketch of this good man's life.

Look at St. Philip Neri, the Apostle of Rome, and you will be edified and astonished at all the kind actions that sprang from his kind heart. His work in the Pilgrim's Hospice alone will fully explain the character of the man. He goes to the door to receive and welcome the poor, tired and foot-sore pilgrims as they arrive. He embraces them, he cheers and consoles them after their long, fatiguing journey. He washes and dries their feet, he waits on them with the greatest care and solicitude, he sets before them plenty of good, substantial food and provides them with neat and comfortable beds. Every one was amazed at such unwonted and over-generous kindness. He made himself all things to all men.

Without however going back so far into times past, our own age supplies us with many examples of heroic acts of kindness done by saintly men and women. Cast your eyes for instance towards the Hawaiian Islands and you will notice a young priest disembarking from a ship at the Leper Colony of Molokai. It is Father Damien. He has exiled himself forever from relatives and friends and from all the comforts of civilization to spend the rest of his life with those afflicted wretches huddled together in one little corner of the island between the sea on one side and impassable mountain barriers on the other. He goes there to be to them a doctor, a nurse, a friend, and a father—to do all he can to alleviate their sorrows in this world and to prepare them for a better. Besides being an Apostle he was a Martyr of kindness, and he now wears the Martyr's crown.

The life of any ordinary Sister of Charity presents

to our consideration numerous acts of most disinterested kindness. Whether it be in the homes of the poor, amidst the orphans in the asylum, or at the dying bed, she is continually leading souls to God by her edifying presence, her sweet words, and her self-sacrificing attention to every want.

We may never rise to the heroism of these men or women in the practice of kindness, but we must try to imitate them in our own small way. Within the limits of the circle of our ordinary life many occasions daily offer themselves for the exercise of kindness. Among those on whom we should lavish it at all times are: First, Our parents whose loving, unceasing attention to our happiness and welfare we can never repay; secondly, old people the weight and burden of whose years we should try to diminish and whose way to the grave we should smooth and brighten; thirdly, little children on whose plastic minds kindness will make an impression that may be a prolific source of generous thoughts and noble deeds in after life; fourthly, the poor, the representatives of Jesus Christ. They may be forbidding in appearance, they may have repulsive dispositions, they may be inconsiderate and ungrateful, but it makes no difference; they hold the place of God. "Whatever you do to one of these little ones, you do to Me," says Jesus Christ. In conclusion, my dear brethren, let us pray God to give us the spirit of kindness which is really the Spirit of God Himself. It will make us resemble Him here below and cause us to see His face hereafter.

The Two Judgments.

"The day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can stand it."

Joel II: ii.

The day of the Lord, my friends, which is so great and terrible is the one of which Daniel prophesied when he said, "I beheld till thrones were placed and the Ancient of Days sat; his garment was white as snow and the hair of his head like clean wool; his throne like flames of fire; the wheels of it like a burning fire. A swift stream of fire issued forth from before him; thousands of thousands ministered to him and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him; the judgment sat and the books were opened." This day is also described by St. John in the Apocalypse: "And I saw," says he, "a great white throne and one sitting upon it from whose face the earth and heaven fled away and there was no place found for them. And I saw the dead great and small standing in the presence of the throne and the books were opened: and another book was opened which is the book of life and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell gave up the dead that were in them, and they were judged every one according to their works." The day then in question is none other than the great day of the world's doom. When that day arrives, time will have ceased to be, the blood of Jesus will have flowed for the last time over the guilty soul in the sacrament of penance, the last sacrifice of the Mass will have been

offered, and the last grace conferred. Mary will then no more send up her powerful prayers for the salvation of men; the Angel Guardians will have been relieved of their charges; the fires of purgatory will have been extinguished, and only heaven and hell will remain. Whoever is saved then commences an uninterrupted eternity of bliss; whoever is lost then is lost forever without a ray of hope to light up within his breast the smallest consolation during an unending future.

The coming of that day is to be preceded by many signs and wonders. Wars and the rumors of wars will afflict the hearts of peace-loving men; the ghastly forms of pestilence and famine will stalk about on their destructive mission; ministers of error will appear spreading about them their baneful doctrines; nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom; treachery and hatred will be rife, and because iniquity hath abounded, the charity of many will grow cold. And although the tribulation of those days will be so great that the like was never seen before, nor ever shall be seen again on this earth, there will nevertheless be people living then as they were living in the days of Noe. "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, even till the day in which Noe entered the ark and they knew not till the flood came and took them all away, so even on that final day of reckoning, men will so forget God that they will be acting as if there were to be no end of life and no Judgment. Now when we look abroad over the face of the earth as it is at present, we might almost imagine that we see some of those foreboding signs of which I

have been speaking. It is not however my intention to detain you with speculations on the probable nearness or remoteness of the world's end, for such speculations are foolish deceits against which the words of Christ should guard us: "Of that day and hour no one knoweth; no, not the angels of Heaven but the Father alone." Since then it is not for us to know the time or moments which the Father hath put in His own power, let us not be concerned on this point, but rather let us prepare for the judgment which will come sooner or later; let us reflect on its details, in order that continually keeping it before our eyes, we may so order our lives as to merit a favorable sentence. What, then, are the particulars of this general Judgment? The judge will not be man. He will be truth and Justice itself before whom we shall have to stand; Jesus will be the one who will decide our cause, "for we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil." What a subject of joy and what a motive for strong hope to have such judge! Jesus loves us ardently, he has done much to save us, he is deeply interested in our welfare and he will not then regard our ruin as a matter of little concern. He would fain search for excuses for us; he will recollect the dust we are made of, he will consider our innate weakness and the strength of our temptations; he will be mindful of the sorrows, hardships and miseries which we underwent in life; in a word he will do his best to attenuate the faults of which we have been guilty, and magnify the little good which, with his grace, we have effected. This manifest partiality to us arises from the fact that he is our brother and our friend.

It often happens that kinsmen or brothers are not friends, but Jesus as I have said, stands related to us under this double aspect. He is our Brother because His Father is our Father and His Mother Mary our Mother, also; that He is our friend we know from the love He has borne us and from the anxiety He has ever shown for our welfare. We shall not surely be condemned, if Jesus can help it. Ah! but what a bitter thing it will be if, after all, He shall have to decide against us; if He who has desired so much to have us with Himself during all eternity in His Father's house shall have to banish us away forever from His presence. The sight of His indignation will fill the soul with a peculiar anguish and terror and in its agony and confusion it will cry out to the mountains and rocks: "Fall upon me and hide me from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb." May the Lord in His mercy through the compassionate love of His Sacred Heart and the tender affection He bears His Holy Mother grant that on that day we may not have the misfortune to see the face of Jesus kindled with anger against us.

Besides the judge, witnesses will be there also and prominent among them will be our old, arch-enemy the devil—he who has watched us from the dawn of reason, from our first consciousness, who has hovered around us, tempted us and often trampled us in the dust. He will be there with all his accusations written in the record of his malignant memory. Instigated by envy and hatred of us, he will so exaggerate our slightest faults as to make them appear, if possible, the most dreadful crimes, and the graver sins which we have committed he will be sure to paint in all their hideous deformity. Nothing will escape him;

he will show the day and the hour in which we offended God, and point out the place and all the circumstances of the sin. There too shall witness against us those whom we led into sin and those who took part with us in our transgressions whose faces may have long since been blotted out from our recollection, the play-fellows of our childhood, the companions of our youth, and those with whom we were acquainted at a later period of life. To these witnesses we must join the Holy Angels and the Saints of God whose example was so often set before us and whose prayers so often ascended to the throne of mercy in our behalf. Among these I must point to one in a particular manner, and that is our holy Guardian Angel, that loving spirit who has ever been anxiously watching our every step, whispering in our ear words of advice, warding off evils from us, and obtaining for us many blessings. Oh, how happy shall we be if he will be able on that day to bring forward a favorable testimony.

Let us now see those things on which we shall be tried. "The judgment sat," says the Scripture, "and the books were opened." These books according to St. Alphonsus are the gospel and the conscience. In the gospel will appear what we should have done and in the conscience what we really have done, and according to these two books we shall be judged. We shall then have to account for all those sins which we have committed by actions such as could be seen by our fellow men. Under this catalogue will appear all external sins of impurity, of fraud, of violence, and of the tongue such as calumnies and detractions. "The tongue indeed is a little member," says St. James, "and boasteth great things; the tongue is a fire and a world of iniquity, and is placed among our members, which de-

fileth the whole body and inflameth the wheel of our nativity, being set on fire by hell." To these are to be added sins of scandal, that is those sins by which through word or example we have led others to offend God. Oh! it would be better for us never to have been born than to have to account for sins of scandal on that day. The Lord will meet us then as a bear that is robbed of her whelps and will rend the inner parts of our liver and will devour us as a lion. All our internal sins which could be known but to Him who alone knoweth the hearts of the children of men will also be brought up against us. Such for instance are those thoughts by which the soul revolted against its Maker, sins of pride, malice, hatred, jealousy and covetousness; sins of contempt for others and of too great an esteem of ourselves; sins of wicked, carnal desires, and sins by which we wished our neighbor harm in his person or property. There are sins of omission too, like that committed by the five foolish virgins and for which they were excluded from the marriage feast and these also will form matter for the judgment. Hence we shall be held to answer for every grace we despised, for the sacraments we neglected when we were bound to receive them, and for the duties which we owed to our family or our friends but which our habits of carelessness or our vices prevented us from fulfilling. Moreover a strict account will be exacted of the powers of our souls; of our reason which we abused by upholding theories and philosophies opposed to revelation, defending heresy and leading others astray, and of our will which has been so frequently debased by being employed in the love of the world and its follies rather than our Heavenly Father. Such is but an imperfect sketch of the great event which we call the

General Judgment. But as the sentence to be passed on us then, is to be decided according to the issue of the particular judgment which takes place immediately at the hour of death, this latter is practically the most important for us, since by it our fate will be determined for all eternity. It is the judgment that, at this very instant I am speaking to you, innumerable souls are now undergoing. The fact that some of these are now being condemned and lost should excite within us a salutary reflection. There was a time perhaps when most of us here were in sin. Had we died then and been judged what would have become of us? The answer is but too plain. We never should have seen the face of God, the joy of salvation would never have throbbed through our hearts, we never should have been able to fall down in silent gratitude to kiss Mary's feet, thrones in heaven which had been intended for us never could have been occupied by us, our voices would have to be missing through all eternity in that celestial choir which is continually singing the praises of the Lord. The justice of God however did not overtake us in our sins, but His mercy has spared us and given us time to repair the evil which we have committed. How long that mercy may endure we cannot say, "for at what hour you think not," says Christ, "the Son of Man will come." It is not the oldest, the feeblest and most sickly who always die first, but often those who are young, strong and healthy, who seem to have many years before them. It is certain, then, we shall all be cited sooner or later before the judgment seat and each one of us will have to stand alone and single-handed, as if no one else but himself was to be judged. If found wanting, we shall be treated as the soldier who failed in the duty which he owed to his country's flag; we shall be stripped of the armor

of God, of the breast-plate of justice and of the helmet of salvation, of the shield of faith and of the sword of the Spirit, or like an unfaithful priest, (for we are all priests in a wide sense) we shall be degraded from our priestly office. The chasuble will be taken off our shoulders, the stole will be torn from our necks, the maniple will be loosed from our arms, the sacred unction will be scraped from our consecrated hands, and we shall be cast forth from the presence of the great High Priest.

Saints have trembled at the thought of the judgment, "What shall I do," says Job, "when God shall rise to judge and when He shall examine what shall I answer him?" We perhaps do not tremble but it is not because we have no reasons for trembling, it is not because we have a better chance than the saints. We do not tremble because we do not see and understand things as the saints saw and understood them, because we do not know God and the danger we are in of losing Him. Let us, therefore, be resolved to think more of this subject hereafter; let us frequently ponder over the judgment, but above all, let us fear it, not indeed with a servile, desponding fear, but with that fear which, whilst it makes us throw ourselves more and more on the goodness and mercy of God, will at the same time stimulate us to do all in our power to prepare for that great event. When men fear some unfavorable issue in worldly matters, they generally take such measures as will enable them to escape it. Let us then imitate them and while we fear the judgment let us prepare for it. Now the first and most necessary part of this preparation consists in making a good confession, in placing ourselves in the tribunal of penance and accusing ourselves humbly and sincerely of

all our transgressions. A good confession wipes out the handwriting that was against us, gives us back that inheritance we had sold for a mess of potage and restores to our troubled consciences that calm and peace which we lost when we sinned. The second element of this preparation is found in a continually abiding spirit of contrition. Since every act of perfect sorrow is capable of cleansing the soul and of diminishing the temporal punishment due to sin, it may easily be conceived what accumulated acts springing from so constant a habit will effect. He who possesses this habit will frequently call to mind the sins by which he has wounded the heart of Jesus, and in the bitterness of his grief, bewail the misfortune which allowed him to commit them. Such a person is always in the grace of God, always ready to appear before his Creator. There is something very beautiful about a penitent whose soul is ever melting into sorrow at the remembrance of by-gone sin; it may be the undoubted presence of God's grace reflecting from his soul, it may be the resemblance which he bears to Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, that looks so attractive.

Continually abiding contrition seems to be so rare that we almost think we shall never obtain it. If we had to excite it solely by our own efforts, we might have reason to believe so, but this is not the case. We must look to God for it; it is His gift, and if we ask it He will give it to us. In the time of the impious Achab, King of Israel, the heavens were so sealed up, that not a drop of rain fell during the space of three years. The springs all dried up, the verdure disappeared from the fields, and the cattle were perishing for want of sustenance. But after Elias had fallen prostrate in prayer on the top of Mount Carmel, a small speck

about the size of a man's hand, appeared in the distance. Afterwards the wind blew, the small speck developed into immense dark clouds which came up and obscured the sky and at last the long-wished-for rain streamed down in torrents on the parched earth. Let us imitate Elias and let us pray, and let our prayers be for the waters of contrition. It will first appear in our hearts like the little speck of a cloud on the horizon, it will become larger and larger as our prayers continue until at last it will descend in copious showers upon our souls. Living thus in continual exercise of contrition we shall pass in security, happiness and peace the remainder of our short pilgrimage here below and when the Lord shall call us to Judgment, instead of condemning us He will change our sorrow into joy.

Almsgiving.

"Defraud not the poor of alms and defer not to give to him that is in distress.

Ecclesiasticus.

Most people, it seems to me, look upon almsgiving as a matter of choice, as a charitable action, that may be performed or omitted just as their inclination may direct. Such persons however labor under a very grave and serious mistake. Almsgiving is a most imperative duty. When Christ was asked what was the greatest commandment in the law, (Matt. 22 : 37.) he replied : "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first

commandment." "And the second," he continued "is like to this : Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets." In this answer of our Divine Lord, as you easily perceive, the love of our neighbor is just as forcibly insisted on as the love of God himself. In fact the two commands are so allied, so intertwined, that we cannot possibly love God without at the same time loving our neighbor, and *vice versa.* He, therefore, who says he loves God and loves not his neighbor is a liar and the truth is not in him. Now as we must not be deceived about the urgent obligation there is upon each one of us to love our neighbor, so we must not allow ourselves to misunderstand the true nature of this obligation. The love that is commanded must not be hidden away and buried in our souls ; it must not be restricted to kindly feelings simply or to good wishes. It was against such bare sentimentalism that the Baptist inveighed when preaching to the multitudes on the banks of the Jordan. Don't you, he said to his hearers, Don't you trust to the fact that you have the true faith, don't you say to yourselves : we have Abraham for our Father ; but bring forth works worthy of penance, that is, he that hath two coats let him give to him that hath none and he that hath meat let him do in like manner. It is the same lesson that was subsequently taught by the Blessed Apostle when he said, "Non diligamus verbo neque lingua sed opere et veritate," that is, "Let us not love in word nor in tongue but in deed and in truth." (1. John iii : 18.) The love of our neighbor then must be a living, substantial love, and must show its vitality by outward visible actions of mercy. If it is not backed up by good

works, it is a dead, a useless thing, a most deceptive phantom; it is not love at all. The consequence is, to use the words of Holy Writ, That he who hath the substance of this world and shall see his brother in need and shall put up his bowels from him, cannot be possessed of that real love of his neighbor without which salvation is an impossibility, neither can the charity of God abide in such a man. If therefore there is any reliance to be placed upon the deductions of logic, and if it is true that we cannot be saved unless the flame of God's holy love burns bright and warm in our hearts, it is equally true that we shall not be saved unless we are charitable to our neighbors, unless we perform works of mercy, unless we are kind and generous to the poor.

The existence and the requirements of this great and unavoidable obligation will become the more apparent when we consider the explicit words of God himself, commanding works of charity. "There will not," says He, "be wanting poor in the land of thy habitation: therefore I command thee to open thy hand to thy needy and poor brother that liveth in the land." (Deut. xv.) You will here notice that these words do not merely imply an exhortation, a counsel, or an advice, but a direct command of the most exacting kind "Therefore I command thee to open thy hand to thy needy and poor brother that liveth in the land." The duty thus so strongly enforced in Deuteronomy we find urged upon us with equal stress in Ecclesiasticus (iv: 13.) "Help the poor because of the commandment, and send him not away empty-handed because of his poverty." These words are too plain for any commentary, showing as they do, in the plainest and most unmistakable terms that the obligation of assisting the

needy is entirely outside the domain of controversy. When therefore the cold, shrivelled and trembling hand of the aged and suffering is reached out to you for a little assistance, when the distressing wants of some large, destitute and helpless family in silent accents implore your generous sympathy, when the voice of the wretched, the tear of the widow and the cry of the orphan appeal to your charity, no process of reasoning is required to prove to you your duty under the circumstances. On such occasions to decline to loosen your purse strings, to refuse to relax the iron grip with which you clutch your hoarded treasures, even to give with a reluctant heart and in niggardly proportions, is to fly in the very face of God, to declare you will not obey and to become a rebel against His divine authority.

To the sin of disobedience thus committed we also add the crime of injustice, by retaining possession of what does not belong to us. All that we are and all that we possess come from the pure bounty of Almighty God, and are to be disposed of according to the intentions of the beneficent donor. If these things were given to us absolutely, we might do with them as we pleased, but such is not the case. They were given to us with a proviso, and according to that proviso we are to retain them only as stewards. A portion of them is the property of the poor, and must go to them. This to some may seem an exaggeration, but it is no exaggeration; it is the sober, plain truth of God taught us by His Church. Saint Augustine, one of her greatest doctors, says, "Whatever is left over after duly feeding and clothing ourselves should not be kept for luxury, but should by almsdeeds be placed in the heavenly treasury. If we do other-

wise, we make use of things that do not belong to us." With different words, he expresses the same idea in another place. "The superfluities of the rich," says he, "are necessary to the poor. He that keeps these for himself retains the property of others." This doctrine we know did not originate with Saint Augustine, but with God himself." Listen to the Holy Ghost speaking by the mouth of Ecclesiasticus: "Defraud not the poor of alms and defer not to give to him that is in distress. Bow down thy ear cheerfully to the poor and pay what thou owest." In this quotation from Holy Writ, the words "defraud" and "owest" imply a strict obligation of justice which we must fulfil or lose our immortal souls. The man therefore who refuses to help the orphans, the poor, and his suffering brethren when he is able to do so, is nothing less than a thief and a robber and that too of the worst kind. This will become more intelligible by the following example. Let us suppose that a father of a large family, a man too of unbounded wealth, is about to die. Instead of dividing his large property among his numerous children, for good reasons of his own he prefers to leave it all to one son, with the strict injunction that he should never forget his brothers and sisters but always provide for their wants. The son finally succeeds to this immense estate, but instead of carrying out the last wishes of his departed father acts just as if his ample inheritance was left to him for his sole use and benefit. He builds himself a large, most commodious, and most imposing mansion; he adorns its surroundings in a most artistic manner with elegant statuary, promenades and shady groves, and indulges in every pleasure and every luxury that his appetite or his fancy can suggest. Wholly bent on

catering to every whim of his own pampered existence, he entirely ignores his brothers and sisters, those who are so near to himself and were so dear to his father, and will not part with one cent to relieve their dire distress and misery. They even become an eyesore to him, he drives them off his estate, he keeps them at a distance and would, if he could, eradicate their very names from his memory. It is not necessary for me to ask your opinion of such a man. You will all agree with me that he is a black-hearted wretch, a most dishonest scoundrel. Keeping for his own purposes what was given him only in trust for others, and refusing to alleviate their sufferings with what he does not need himself, he becomes a moral monstrosity for which the appellation of thief is too dignified a name. Now what is the difference between this man and any one of us who refuses to assist his needy neighbor? There is not the least difference. Whatever we have over and above what is required for our proper maintenance, God bestowed upon us that we might have something wherewith to do good to the poor. If we retain what belongs to the poor we commit a crime against God, a crime against justice, and such a crime as will cry to Heaven for vengeance.

Since such is the state of the case we are not at all surprised at the threats which God makes and the punishments which He inflicts upon those who refuse to give a helping hand to the needy. In the first place such persons are stripped of every vestige of the grace of God. "He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother in need and shall put up his bowels from him, how doth the charity of God abide in him?" (1 John iii: 17.) It is impossible therefore

according to St. John for such a man to be in the grace of God, and without the grace of God what will be his condition? Whilst living, although he may appear to flourish and to prosper, he will be withering under the curse of Heaven, and when he dies, he will receive the sentence of eternal damnation from a Judge who will be swayed by no sentiments of pity in determining the degree of his punishment. Judgment without mercy to him who does not show mercy. Even were one guilty of no other crime, this hard-heartedness toward the poor would be sufficient to condemn him. Witness for instance the case of the rich man spoken of by St. Luke (xvi: 17). Avarice seems to have been his only fault. Abounding in this world's wealth he denied himself nothing. His house was a sort of terrestrial paradise, his clothes were of the most costly texture and make, and his table groaned under all the delicacies that the season and the market afforded. He could easily have given alms, but thinking only of himself he allowed the poor to depart as hungry and as empty-handed as they came. No other sin is ascribed to him, and yet when he dies he does not go to hell simply, but, to use the forcible language of the Scriptures, he is buried in it. But some one may say, surely if that rich man were good otherwise, he might have been saved. The supposition is false, he would not; for, as Pope St. Leo says, "So great is the power of mercy that without it the possession of all the other virtues will avail a man nothing." "Misericordia virtus tanta est ut sine illa cœtera, etsi sint, prodesse non possunt." "What," says St. John Chrysostom, "is to be compared with virginity, and yet it is of no value when not joined

with almsgiving. If, therefore," he continues, "virgins are excluded from heaven because they did not practice charity towards the poor, who can be saved without it? No one," he replies, "for he that has it not must necessarily perish." So true are these words of St. John that, in condemning the wicked to hell, God alludes only to their lack of charity, as if that were their only crime, or the crime which was the cause of all their other wickedness. "Depart from me you cursed into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave me not to eat: I was thirsty and you gave me not to drink: I was a stranger and you took me not in: naked and you covered me not: sick and in prison and you did not visit me." As you see from these words of our Lord, the great and only charges he will bring against the reprobate on the last day will be their ill-treatment and neglect of the poor. That is the sin which will especially seal their doom. Hence it was well said by Chrysostom, "No one will save you from Hell unless you obtain assistance from the poor." "A gehenna vos nemo eruet nisi a pauperibus auxilium consequameni."

Now these commands and awful menaces of Almighty God in reference to works of charity should, if we have any fear or faith in our hearts, induce us not to neglect this most important duty. In stimulating ourselves, however, to works of charity we may receive very valuable assistance from the consideration of the immense blessings that such works bring upon the doer. "Shut up alms in the heart of the poor," says Ecclesiasticus, (xxix: 15,) "and it shall obtain help for thee against all evil. Better than the shield of the mighty and better than the spear: it shall fight for thee against thy enemy." Moreover all the richest gifts of

God's mercy, the forgiveness of our sins and His holy grace are promised to those who assist the poor. "For alms," says Tobias, (XII. 9,) "delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sin and maketh us to find mercy and life everlasting." Sin is a most ponderous burden, it weighs us down, it crushes us to the very earth. It takes away peace from our hearts and involves us in the most abject misery, and to present unhappiness it adds the cheerless prospect and the torturing dread of endless woe. Many of us no doubt know this well from the experience of the past; some, it may be, are even at this very moment suffering from the presence of accumulated sins. Now, if unfortunately, there are here before me persons who are conscious of being enemies of God, who feel that they are entangled in the meshes of some evil habit, from which it seems impossible to escape, to those persons I would say: Cheer up, do not despair, remember the words of St. Luke, "Give alms and behold all things are clean unto you" (XI: 41). Be kind and liberal to the poor and God will open your eyes and touch your hearts. You will then see with astonishment the filth and malice of your sins: the most sincere sorrow will inundate your souls, the powerful influence of grace will lead you to the confessional, and there, after being cleansed of every defilement, you will commence to enjoy a happiness in comparison of which the pleasures of this life are empty delusions, and which you would not barter away for all the gold and silver the world ever saw.

The works of charity will also operate most powerfully in securing to you the immeasurable happiness of a good death. "Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor: the Lord will deliver him in the evil day." To die is something that we cannot but fear, but to die in our sins, to die enemies of

God, to go before our Judge reeking with guilt is a misfortune beyond the description of any human words. In order, then, that we may surely escape such a death, in order that we may leave this world friends of the Almighty, we must now become the friends and generous benefactors of the poor, "For alms deliver from all sin and from death and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness." (Tob 11:11.)

But besides these wonderful spiritual favors, God also grants to the charitable many marvelous gifts, even in the temporal order. The temporal order, as we all know, is as much under the supreme dominion of Divine Providence as the Spiritual order. "Domini est terra et plenitudo ejus. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." God, therefore, holds in His hands temporal blessings of all sorts and bestows them on whom He pleases. "Spiritus spirat ubi vult." Now in the distribution of these temporal favors it is to the charitable that He delights to be especially generous. "Nulla omnino res est qua Dei benevolentian perinde conciliat ac misericordia," says St. Gregory Nazianzen, i. e., there is nothing that so attracts the benevolence of God as mercy. By their good works, the charitable make God their debtor and place Him as it were under obligations to them, and as you are aware, they lose nothing by having such a Debtor. God's magnanimous nature would not permit it. So that in reality, as St. Gregory observes, what is given to the poor should not be looked upon as a gift which we part with, but as a loan which we will surely get back again. "Fœneratur Domino," says Proverbs (xix:17), "qui miseretur pauperis. He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord," and that too on interest as the latin word implies. It is evident, therefore, that the charitable will not in the least diminish

their temporal goods by giving alms to the poor. On the contrary, God will not be content with keeping want from their door. According to his promise, "Qui dat pauperi, non indigebit, he that gives to the poor will not want." But He will do more, He will pour out the good things of this life in abundance upon them. "Honor the Lord with thy substance," says Solomon (Prov. iii:9), "and give Him of the first of all thy fruits and thy barns shall be filled with abundance and thy presses shall run over with wine." In this quotation, the filling up of the barns and the overflowing of the wine-presses are figures of speech by which is typified the great prosperity that God will bestow on the charitable, according to another promise He makes in Ecclesiasticus (xxxv:12), "Give to the Most High according to the ability of thy hands, for the Lord maketh recompense and will give thee seven times as much."

These are certainly great and encouraging promises, and promises, too, which we know God will fulfil as surely as the sun shines in the heavens. If, as to their fulfillment, you have any misgivings; if, which Heaven forbid, you doubt either the veracity or the power of God, I shall simply ask you to try the Lord, and this is precisely what He Himself invites you to do in the words of Malachias (iii:10), "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be meat in my house, and try me in this saith the Lord, if I open not unto you the floodgates of heaven and pour you out a blessing even unto abundance."

But it seems to me that I need say no more on the necessity and the advantages of almsgiving. If, therefore, you have any regard for the command of God, if you set any value on your soul's salvation, if you desire the favor of God both in temporal and spiritual matters,

stretch out your hands to the poor, never refuse to succor the suffering ones of Jesus Christ, remembering the words of the apostle, "Whatever things a man will sow, the same shall he reap." He that sows in benedictions shall reap of benedictions.—II Corin. ix: 6.

The Sorrowful Mother.

"And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed."

—St. Luke, ii: 35.

Would to God that the well-beloved disciple, whose privilege it was to stand near the Holy Virgin at the foot of the cross, were here just now, that he might relate to us in his own burning words, the heart-rending grief of that afflicted Mother. The painter's pencil may portray the calm and tranquil majesty that dignified her as she stood there a witness of her Son's agony; the chisel of the sculptor may imprint in marble the tracery of the grief marked in unmistakable lines on her fair countenance; the poet's pen may in most eloquent terms give some faint impression of the causes of her trouble, but there is nothing on this earth which can give us an idea of the anguish that preyed unseen on her motherly heart. Without defining the nature of sorrow, we know that it is the offspring of sin, for if there had been no sin there never would have been sorrow. Unlike its source, however, it contains nothing that is evil: it is rather an angel in disguise leading us to a better world. We all know what sorrow is, for we all have tasted of its bitterness. But whatever may have been our experience, we never felt a sorrow like that which fell to the lot of the Mother of Jesus. Her sufferings even surpassed in their intensity the combined agonies of all the martyrs. "To whatever cruelty the bodies of the martyrs were subjected," says St. Anselm, "it was light, or rather nothing

at all, in comparison with what she underwent." So true is this that St. Bernard, speaking of the same thing, tells us, that "So great was the sorrow of the Virgin that if it were divided around among all creatures capable of suffering they would all perish instantly." When our imagination, therefore, represents her to us as standing at the foot of the cross, the truthful picture of united loveliness and grief, we feel that as purity never dwelt in a more sacred shrine and as beauty never veiled a fairer sanctuary so sorrow never sat enthroned in a more afflicted soul. Under the crushing weight of such grief it was only the omnipotence of God that kept her existence from being shivered in pieces. "To what shall I compare thee? or to what shall I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? to what shall I equal thee that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Sion? for great as the sea is thy destruction: who shall heal thee?"

The feelings of an ordinary mother standing by the bedside of her dying son reflect on our souls the magnitude of her distracted desolation. The richest monarchies and the highest civilizations never produced an object that could, in her estimation, be compared with that son, and now death is dragging him away from her embraces. From the very first moment that her eye rested on his infant loveliness her heart was bound up with his very existence. The first words he learned to lisp she caught up with a rapturous exultation, as if they were the melody of an angel's song. His beautiful hair falling in graceful ringlets upon his little shoulders, his bright, blue eyes beaming with innocence and confiding love, his childish prattle, his ceaseless activity in romping around the precincts of his happy home, formed for her an inebriating fountain of bliss. He was her joy and her treasure, and she had hoped that he would be the

prop of her declining years. But God, who does all things well, has thought fit to call that son to himself, and the mother has to stand by his couch to witness the wreck of her hopes and gaze on the sunset of her happiness. This earth has now nothing that will take the place of her child: the sky, that was once bright and cheery, is now dark and lowering: life has lost its charm, and the undisturbed rest of the grave would be a boon in her present misery. These harrowing pangs of sorrow which the death of a child must ever bring to any mother's heart were, in the case of our Lady, multiplied and intensified by a group of the most uncommon circumstances. Hers was no ordinary child. He was the uncreated goodness itself clad in our own human flesh. Possessing all the treasures of the Divinity, every virtue and every quality that had the faintest claim on the admiration of men shone forth in him and were to her the source of bewildering wonder and a most enthusiastic admiration. The records of his life exhibited but an unbroken series of acts of filial love. He was the best and the dearest of sons. He was the very light of her eye; the very throb of her heart, and she loved him with all the marvelous powers of her own unparalleled soul. She adored him. To see a son like this leave this world, as men often do, surrounded by all the comforts and attentions that love can suggest, would indeed be hard enough, but such a consolation was not reserved for her. She had to witness him die the victim of disgrace and of the most unheard-of cruelty. After being dragged through the streets like a felon, torn to pieces and covered with countless wounds, more like a poor animal that had been run down and preyed upon by bloodhounds, his poor body was so disfigured that it was with difficulty she could recognize in that mangled mass of humanity

hanging on the cross the lineaments of her cherished son. From the crown of his head to the sole of his feet there was not a sound spot in him: every pore seemed to be a gushing fountain of blood and every fibre was distended with the most racking pain. We can well imagine how her maternal instincts were urging her to rush with relief to her darling son, to smooth his aching brow, to bathe his disfigured face, or moisten his parched lips with a little water, and how her heart was breaking when she saw no possibility of assisting him. Every sigh that he uttered pierced her sensitive nature, every groan that escaped from his lips was like a sword cutting her soul in twain. As she stands there at the foot of the cross her memory recalls the sunny days of Nazareth, when his peaceful presence sanctified her humble dwelling and filled her heart with holy, joyful love, but the thought only renders the ruins of her mind still more desolate as she turns her streaming eyes to gaze on the spectacle before her. That face on which the beauty of holiness had been impressed, and on which the most charming expression of mingled modesty and innocence had been moulded by the highest effort of a heavenly mechanism, was now pale and emaciated and striped with lines of clotted gore that had oozed out of his wounded temples. The sight of that face so sadly marred, of those bleeding hands, of those wounded feet, of that thorn-crowned head added torture upon torture to her lacerated affections and wrung tears of blood from her devoted heart.

When in after years others suffered for the faith and underwent all sorts of tortures to gain the martyr's crown, there was one thing that blunted the sharpness of their corporeal pain, that was more soothing than oil to their wounded flesh, that cheered them up and

strengthened them for the conflict, and that was the thought of Jesus. What was a source of consolation to them was to Mary the principle and the fountain of all her grief. The more she thought of him, the more she reflected on his sufferings, the deeper the sword of sorrow went into her agonizing soul. It was indeed a just recognition the Church made of these boundless sorrows when she conferred on Mary the title of the "Queen of Martyrs."

One would think that she would have looked to seclusion as a solace for her grief, and that she would have spared herself the terrible ordeal of witnessing the crucifixion. What the weakness of nature might suggest to others, her heart would not allow. When her son was the centre of everyone's admiration, when he was sought after to be invested with the crown and the royal purple, when he rode in triumph through the streets of Jerusalem amidst the plaudits and hosannas of an enthusiastic multitude, she was not to be seen, she was hidden away in some well-chosen solitude: but when he is in disfavor, when he becomes an outcast from society and is hung on the disgraceful gibbet of the cross, she is with him then sharing his humiliations and his pains. Her love brings her to the place of the execution and detains her there a living martyr whilst those manifold, gigantic, impetuous combinations of sorrow swept over her interior even as the mountainlike waves of the ocean storm rush before the winds over the mighty deep.

As if the cup of her afflictions were not unpalatable enough, the conduct of the apostles must be added to increase its bitterness. With the exception of St. John they all had basely deserted their Master in the hour of trial. Forgetful of all they had received from Him, of

the untiring charity and uniform kindness of which they had been the object, and of the dignities with which they had been honored, they now leave him to his fate and think only of themselves. Two of them even go much farther. Peter denies with an oath that he ever knew him and Judas accepts thirty pieces of silver as the price of his treason in betraying his friend to the Jews. This cruel ingratitude of the apostles was an unlooked-for source of anguish and stung our Blessed Lady to the very heart.

To the pain she received from the action of the apostles we must add the wounds inflicted on her refined and delicate sensibilities by the infamous crowd of wretches who surrounded the cross. Never does a mother see the child of her bosom in so endearing a light as at the hour of death. His faults, if he had any, then vanish into a viewless unreality, whilst his virtues are magnified to an angelical perfection. Every thing connected with his character and his life is in her estimation something on which the most unbiased love might feast. What in other parents would be considered a pardonable delusion was in the case of Mary the result of incontrovertible facts. And yet it was this son that she had to hear villified, insulted, calumniated, and blasphemed as he dies on the cross. It were not enough for them to put him to so terrible a death: they must supplement his other woes with the cruelty of their taunting jeers.

When we ponder over all these things we think perhaps that we know something of Mary's sufferings, but after all we know but very little. However, we know sufficient to learn a great lesson. As she stands there at the foot of the cross, without breaking the silence that graces her sorrow she teaches us that the nearest and

dearest friends of God are not exempt from suffering. Sorrow seems to be the common inheritance of us all "Whom the Lord loveth," says the wise man, "he chastiseth." Such a manner of treating those we love may indeed seem strange, but upon reflection we shall find it to be a combination of wisdom and kindness. Now the chastisements which God sends us are of two kinds. There are troubles and afflictions of a spiritual nature that are experienced by those who do their best to save their souls, as for example an overwhelming fear of the judgments of God, a thick impenetrable darkness overspreading their souls that carries with it confusion and desolation, continuous, harrowing temptations on the groundless but tormenting persuasion that their souls are abandoned by God notwithstanding all their efforts to live in His holy grace. There are afflictions of a less distressing character, though apparently they are more severe. Among these may be mentioned the pains and inconveniences of sickness, the death of friends that were dear to our hearts, the failure of some cherished scheme, the loss of some object that we highly prized, black, withering calumnies, the unreasonable contradictions of friends, poverty and want. Some of these we will have to bear at some time or other of our life. Perhaps we have already experienced them, and happy for us, if we have been wise enough to recognize their true character, to welcome their coming and to receive them in the spirit in which they had been sent. If God indeed allows our lives to be thus embittered, it is not because He glories in our suffering. He is not a Deity who wishes to be honored by altars raised for the sacrifice of human happiness; He is not a tyrant whose appetite for pleasure is sated with human misery, When, therefore, He who

is the Father of Mercies and the God of all comfort, as St. Paul calls him (1 Cor. 1: 3.), sends us afflictions, it is for our own good that he does so. We should understand this better if we understood the intense malignity of mortal sin. A mortal sin offends God most grievously, as we are all aware, and merits the everlasting punishment of hell. When God pardoned our sins He remitted the punishment of hell, but in his justice he may have left us a temporal punishment instead; that is, he may have changed the punishment of hell, which would never end, into punishment which would some time cease and which must be undergone, if not in this life certainly in purgatory hereafter. Knowing this then, and knowing too the numerous sins which we have committed and the little contrition elicited and penance done for them, we may easily conjecture, that even though our sins are pardoned, there is an immense amount of satisfaction set down to our account in the records of divine justice. To cancel the debt we have thus contracted we might have to spend years upon years; yea, ages upon ages in the flames of purgatory. People now think very little of the sufferings of that place: it is only when they go there that they will understand their real magnitude and lament to think they did not, when they had the opportunity on earth, try to diminish them by voluntary penances. When, therefore, God sends us troubles and afflictions in this life He may do so in order to shorten the time we may have to spend in the prison of purgatory, and to bring us more quickly to His heavenly rest. The greatest troubles we can have here below are at most of a very short duration, but they have an extraordinary power of abbreviating those long, those wearisome and bitter chastisements we would have to undergo in that place from

which no one goes out without paying the last farthing. Viewed in this light the trials of the present life are not evils at all but positive favors sent us by a kind Father. We should therefore receive them as such, embrace them in a spirit of penance, without murmuring or complaining, and acknowledge before God that we deserve far more for our sins. We should bless Him in our sorrows as in our joys, and ask Him to enable us to bear them with patience and love, in order that we may reap from them the great fruit he intends.

There is yet another advantage to be found in the afflictions and troubles of this life: they serve to detach our hearts from the love of this world and fix them upon God. When things go well with us here below, when we have every thing we want and nothing to trouble us, we are inclined to lose sight of God and to forget our best interests, the interests of our soul. Examples of this are common enough. Troubles and afflictions are the mediums which a kind Providence uses to open the eyes of those whom prosperity was blinding and leading to destruction. How many are now in heaven who owe their eternal happiness to the sufferings of this life? How many are now in hell, who if they had been blessed with some great misfortune in this life, would never have met so awful a fate? The privations and sorrows then which we may have to undergo are unmistakable signs of God's love for us. They show that He desires us to belong to Himself and that he does not wish us to be dragged on in that crowd which throngs the road to eternal woe. Hence we should never feel dissatisfied at whatever God may permit to happen to us. If for instance we are poor, we must not lament over our condition, but must bear its inconveniences with patience and store up in our souls

those riches which will make us happy during eternity. Poverty is no evil and no disgrace. Jesus and Mary were poor, and certainly we shall not be lowered by being in their company. If it is not poverty, it may be some other trouble that annoys us, and which tears off the glittering tinsel with which the world practices so much deceit. All these visitations of Providence operate efficaciously on hearts on which words would fall in vain. Look at what adversity did for the prodigal son. In an evil hour he left the home of his childhood and travelled far away into a foreign country, where he led a most debauched and abandoned life. He never would have abandoned his evil course and returned to his happy home, if fortune had continued to shower her favors upon him. Happily, however, for him a famine overspread the land, and, when reduced to such extremities that he was glad to eat the very husks that were thrown to the swine, he entered into himself and determined to go back to his father's house and ask pardon for what he had done. The prodigal is not the only one that adversity has brought to a sense of his duty. Divine Providence has thus often arrested the course of many who forgetful of their souls were riding on with flying colors, in the car of prosperity, over a road strewn with flowers, with the soft, joyous light of success cheering the way. An unseen hand clogs the wheel : there is a break, a collapse, and the eyes of the revellers are opened to look ahead and see the danger to which they were rushing. It was perhaps a severe sickness that befel them, or an accident by which they were severely injured or deprived of a limb, perhaps it was a great loss by fire, by bankruptcy or something of the kind, but whatever it was, it came from the hand of a kind Father who

distributes afflictions in weight and measure. He deals with us much like the kind-hearted surgeon, who indeed has to use the probe and the lance on his patient, but still spares him all the pain he can; for God would not wish us to suffer were it not necessary for us. Hence the same hand that deals the blow sustains us under its pressure, the same hand that inflicts the wound pours in the oil of consolation and applies the healing balm. These thoughts should be a source of comfort to us in all our sufferings and trials. Whenever afflictions befall us, let us look up to the Mother of God standing at the foot of the Cross, and while we rejoice in being found worthy to be made like to her in some respects, let us ask her to pray for us that we may be enabled to bear all that annoys and troubles us, in the spirit of Christian resignation, remembering what St. Paul says in his epistle to the Corinthians, (ii : iv, 17), that that which is at present momentary and light in tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.

The Refuge of Sinners.

"*Refuge of Sinners, pray for us.*"

—Litany of Loretto.

Our blessed Lady, the Virgin Mary, has many beautiful titles; ma n which show forth her intimate connection with the Godhead; many which excite our admiration and wonder and call for our most profound respect. But there is one which ought to have a peculiarly sweet attraction for us in our present condition; one that carrieswith it an air of blissful hope, and whispers volumes of glad, encouraging words to our faint, desponding hearts. It is that under which she is invoked by hundreds, by thousands, yea by millions of Catholics throughout the entire world, as often as they repeat the litany of Loretto, "Mary, Refuge of Sinners, pray for us." Simple as this title may be, who is there that can penetrate the fathomless depths of its meaning, who can grasp the dignity it implies, who can comprehend the ample and efficacious powers it implies? It tells us of the fond love she bears us, and of her immense influence in the court of heaven, it embodies all that is great and glorious in her sacred character, and brightens her other titles with a rich, mellow hue that wonderfully attracts us and makes us regard them with more love and joy. Oh, would that all those much-to-be-pitied people whom misfortune has placed outside of the true fold did but know what a treasure we own in having for our mother Mary, the Refuge of Sinners, and would too, that all the children of the church would utilize this knowledge proposed by their faith, and show by their actions that

they are fully convinced of her power and her love. Deplorable it is indeed, that she is not sought more in humble prayer, since she is so eager to respond to our calls and possesses such capabilities of helping us on to virtue and happiness.

In olden times when God was indignant with His people by reason of the ungrateful return He received for all the benefits and kindnesses heaped upon them, He would fain persuade Moses to pray to Him no more, that He might not be restrained from punishing them as they deserved. "Let me alone," says He, "that my wrath may be enkindled against them and that I may destroy them." The sins of Israel were calling down from Heaven their well-merited punishment, but Moses lifted up his hands in prayer and the justice of God was constrained to make way for mercy. Now, who was Moses in comparison with the Blessed Mother of God? Though a just and holy man, he was, however, born in sin and died before reaching the promised land, in expiation of a fault he had committed, nor did he even enjoy any of those intimate communications with the Divinity which have become the happy portion of the poorest and the lowliest of the children of the New Testament. And if God could not refuse to listen to the prayers of Moses, will he turn away His ear from her whose soul was never for an instant stained with the smallest sin, never in the least obscured by the slightest shadow of a fault, and whose relations to Him have always been of the highest and holiest kind that can be conceived. Yes, God's willingness to satisfy Mary's wishes is as great as the love He bears her, and that love is all but infinite. When first he drew her beautiful soul out of nothing, enriched with graces that outshone the noontide sun in splendor, and dazzled with

their magnificence the eyes of the flaming seraphim, He gazed with an unbounded complacency on the work of His hands and loved her with a love whose magnitude exceeds our limited comprehension. And yet immense as that love was, it increased and became much stronger in proportion as daily and hourly the radiant splendor of her celestial beauty intensified and became more glorious. Such is the love by which God loves her as a masterpiece of His omnipotence: but He loves her also in another way, with that tender, affectionate and reverential love that binds the child to its parent. This second love, which began on the day of the Annunciation and was perfected on the Assumption, possesses at this moment all the force of its primitive vigor. He now remembers those long nine months she bore him in her sacred womb, and all the acts of her maternal solicitude during his early infancy; how she clothed and fed Him, guarded and cherished Him, how she sighed and wept over His wants, His pains and His sufferings. The keen perception of His infinite intellect marshals before His view all those ardent breathings of love and condolence, all those anxieties and cares which swayed her soul in His behalf, and in return His goodness would now appear to unfold its very essence in gratitude upon her, for He not only encircles her brow with a coronet of such marvelous loveliness, that it outstrips immeasurably the combined beauty of the diadems adorning the fairest angels of Heaven, but He endows her also with a share in His own omnipotence, addressing her with the words of Assueras to Esther: "What is thy petition, Mary, that it may begranted thee, and what wilt thou have done?" The power, then, of Mary, is inconceivably great, and when she has such opportunities of doing us good, is it possible that she should neglect them and forget us?

Ah, no; we could not suppose such a thing. Mary is the mother of Him who out of pure love created us, and who, impelled by the same love, came on earth to redeem us. During thirty long years she lived and conversed with Him and from His burning words became familiar with his ardent and unquenchable zeal for the conversion of poor, sinful humanity. The words of Jesus inflamed the hearts of the disciples who were going to Emmaus; "Was not our heart," said they, "burning within us whilst he spoke in the way and opened to us the Scriptures." If such was the effect of the company of Jesus on those two disciples, how must it have ravished the tender and congenial heart of his Blessed Mother. Yes, her sympathetic heart responded perfectly to the throbbings of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, reflected all its benevolent wishes—in a word, was similar to it in one of its principal characteristics, the love of us. Thus she loved us while she was yet on this earth, nor has her affection for us decreased now that she is in the realms above. Seated above all the angels and archangels, on a throne next to that of her Divine Son, wielding the sceptre of her queenly authority, she loves us still with unabated love, feeling happy in being able always to assist us, and rejoicing in the title which her children give her, "Mary, Refuge of Sinners."

And now, my dear brethren, there is not one among us, who if he properly understands his own weakness, will not acknowledge his utter incapability of passing safely unaided through the dangers that beset the path of life, and consequently who does not stand in need of assistance from this great and powerful patroness. If happily we are in the state of grace we must bear in mind that we are not confirmed in that state, but, on the contrary, that we are on the field of

battle, not knowing whether the issue of the contest will prove favorable or not. Our enemies are all drawn up before us watching the moment when we shall be least on our guard, to bear down on our weakness and overcome us with their strength. There is the world with its gilded vanities, its alluring, flattering and deceitful promises, trying to captivate our affections: there is the flesh with its fascinating charms, exerting itself to draw us away from the line of duty and entangle us in its meshes: there, too, stand legions of devils, spirits who with a power and a knowledge rivaling their intense hatred of us, are continually devising ways and means to ruin us forever. In the face of such an array of evils well might the just man tremble, well might he despair if he had not the Mother of God to guard and protect him. Never could he stand for an instant, if she did not cover him with her shield and curb the fury of his assailants. If then Mary's prayers are not only useful but necessary to any one who would with unshaken courage and unfaltering steps, persevere on the road to heaven, how needful must her aiding hand be to those whose conduct bespeaks nothing but tepidity and negligence in the service of God, or whose consciences are loaded down with the weight of unforgiven sin. And alas! on how many such people does the sun daily rise and set. Yes, even before this very altar to-day there may be persons who, because they commit no notorious sins and go to confession perhaps once a year, imagine in their own conceit that they are very good and that everything is right. They think a mortal sin to be nothing, only a trifle of ordinary occurrence, and that they can commit one now and then, because nobody may know of it, and God will forgive them in their next confession, or at least they

will atone for all by a deathbed repentance. Such persons reason as if one mortal sin did not so provoke the wrath of the Most High that He would be justified the moment of its committal in cutting them off and making them sharers in the fate of those rebel angels who dared insult His sacred majesty. They reason as if some prophet, after reading with his piercing eye the dark secrets of the future, had assured them that God would overlook this or that offence and give them so much time to do penance or that they would enjoy all the benefits of the Sacraments before breathing their last breath: they forget the numerous examples of those who retiring to rest at night in the best of health have been found next morning cold and stiff in death, having been called away perhaps without a moment's preparation, and they persuade themselves that none of those sudden illnesses or unforeseen accidents that hurry men off in the twinkling of an eye can ever reach them. Such people indeed are in a very bad condition although they may not know it, and it is very fortunate for them that they have our Blessed Lady to succor them in their dire distress. Let them approach her with a desire to be better and beseech her to help them to have a horror of sin, to love God and herself with more fervor, and to obtain for them the grace of a happy death, and she, who was never yet known to disregard one's supplications, will be mindful to grant them their request. But may there not be too within the reach of my voice some much worse still than those of whom I have been speaking, persons whose life from the time they open their eyes in the morning till they close them at night, is but one continual course of crime. Heaping sin on sin they go in their evil way with as much boldness and indifference as if there

were no God in Heaven able to wreak vengeance on their guilty heads. Fuel for Hell's fire, ready to be cast into it at any time Providence may please to take them from life, they neither desist from their wickedness nor tremble at their future prospect but by their crimes raise their hands towards high heaven, and, as it were, defy the justice of their Maker. Oh! how the angels cover their faces and weep at such a melancholy spectacle. But what must these poor people do? Can they find no balm to heal their wounds? Must they give themselves up to despair and continue to rush headlong to the regions of endless pain and torment? No, no. While a man has the breath of life in him, there is hope for pardon, whether he has committed one sin only or has defiled his conscience with unnumbered crimes. Yes, even if your sins exceed the sands of the sea shore or the stars of the firmament, no matter how great or enormous they are, be they as hideous as those of the very demon himself, pardon is yours if you only wish it. Mary is the Refuge of Sinners; no one need despair. She is the mother of that God whom you have offended, and she will appease his outraged majesty, if you but ask her. Look back on your past life to the time when last you received absolution, when you came from the confessional with a clear conscience and a light heart, who was it obtained for you that happy change? Who was it raised her hands to God and besought him to pardon you and bestow on you the grace of remaining his friend. And when again you had left the path of virtue, had abandoned God and broken through the bands of love with which He had intended to bind you to Himself, when you had so far abused His goodness, His mercy and His patience that His justice could no longer

restrain itself, and His avenging hand was raised to deal you what you so richly deserved, who was it that interposed between the Almighty's arm and you? Who was it that arrested the blow which would have hurled you into hell but Mary, the Refuge of Sinners? You had, it may be, offered up to her some little prayers in some now forgotten moments, when grace found its way to your soul, when the light of the eternal truths flashed more vividly across your mind and caused one serious reflection on your salvation. Perhaps it was only a few Hail Marys you said, and she heard you and obtained for you a longer time for repentance. How many are here now, who were it not for Mary would be to-day lying in their graves and with their souls buried among the reprobate in hell? How many too are here for whom Mary is now perhaps beseeching God that they may have mercy shown them a little longer and not be cut off in their sins? It should indeed be to us a source of great joy to have so powerful and so loving a patroness, so interested in our welfare. If then you are not conscious of being in mortal sin, thank God with all your soul, and raise your heart to Mary and implore her assistance to remain in that happy state. But if unfortunately you have gone aside from the ways of justice and offended God in some grievous manner, with hasty steps run to your Mother, hide yourself under the mantle of her charity, beg her to restore you to grace and repentance, and she will smile fondly on her erring child and grant you even more than you ask. The devil indeed may tempt you to remain in your sins by depicting virtue to you as something harsh and disagreeable, by representing as impossible all efforts to overcome the attractions of vice, the influence of wicked companions, and the enslaving power of long.

cherished habits of sin. These difficulties will all vanish before the powerful influence of Mary's prayers. In the first book of Kings it is related that once the Philistines being about to assail the Children of Israel, the latter, terrified at the approach of the enemy, betook themselves to the Prophet to ask him to supplicate the Lord in their behalf. "Cease not," said they, "to cry to the Lord our God for us, that he may save us out of the hands of the Philistines." And immediately after we read, "And Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered it whole for a holocaust to the Lord: and Samuel cried to the Lord for Israel: and the Lord heard him. And it came to pass when Samuel was offering the holocaust the Philistines began the battle against Israel, but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines and terrified them and they were overthrown before the face of Israel." Similar to the fate of those enemies of God's people will be that of all those enemies who meet you on the road to virtue, if you only invoke the assistance of Mary. In all your troubles, therefore; in all your temptations, have recourse to Mary, and if you try to be a faithful and devoted child of hers, she will prove a loving mother to you in every sense of the word. She will ever watch over and guard you, and never desert you till she sees you safe in the kingdom of her Son.

The Assumption.

"Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array?"
—Cant. vi:

In the festival of to-day two events are conjointly celebrated, the death of the Blessed Virgin Mary and her triumphal entry into the Kingdom of her Son.

After the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven she lived for many years. These were years of joy and consolation, of edification and encouragement to the members of the infant Church, but to her they were years of bitterness and pain, of mourning, of loneliness and heartfelt longing. The only object of her love had departed from her, he who was the source, the stay and the joy of her existence, and to be separated from such a one was a torture that no prolonged martyrdom of the most racking pain could equal; it was like tearing the very sinews of the soul asunder. Without his blessed presence this earth to her was void and empty: it had no gladdening sunshine, no balmy zephyrs, no cheerful, green fields; it was a bleak, barren desert, sandy and uninviting as far as the eye could reach, or like the valley the Prophet saw in the vision, full of dead men's bones. Life for her was not worth living; it was no life at all; it was a tombless death, for the vital spark of her existence had passed away.

But the end of her pilgrimage is at hand. She has reached the end of life's weary and thorny road. The moment that she had so long and so earnestly sighed for has arrived. "Behold," says she, "my beloved speaks to me: arise, hasten, my friend, my

dove, my beautiful one, and come." (Canticle II : 10.) At the word of her Maker, her beautiful soul disentangles itself from its surroundings, arises on the pinions of a dove and wings its way to the happy home of her Eternal Son.

Where the death of the Blessed Virgin occurred we cannot positively say. Some think that she died at Ephesus, and others, with greater probability, at Jerusalem. But wherever her death took place, we are sure it must have filled all who witnessed it with wonder and delight. It was not like any other death. We know how impressively beautiful were the deaths of the saints. Look at the last hours of St. Anthony of Padua, of St. Stanislaus, of St. Margaret of Cortona, and through the atmosphere which surrounds them you almost think you can catch a glimpse of celestial glory. If the saints of God pass away in such a bright and soothing halo of almost tangible sanctity, what must have been the death of the Mother of God! Like her entrance into the world, it was a thing unique in itself. It was no convulsive breaking up of the system ; it had no agonizing pain, nor distorted features. It was an unconscious, sweet transition, a "drifting gently down the tides of sleep," a faint creaking of the doors opening into sunlight and freedom, the music of the clanking chain falling to the earth from off the fettered limb.

The contemplation of the last moments of the Blessed Virgin causes our souls to repeat with burning fervor those words of holy writ: "moriatur anima mea morte justorum et fiant novissma mea illorum similia.—May my soul die the death of the just, and may my last end be like to theirs." We can never indeed expect to die like our Blessed Mother, but we must die like one of her children. We must die in the peace and love of

God, with our sins condoned by sacramental confession and atoned for by sorrow and works of penance. If we cannot die as untarnished innocents, we must die as true penitents. Sorrow for sin is the only way of reaching that happy country where there is no sin and no sorrow. The prayer of the holy King should be ever on our lips. "Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea et a peccato meo munda me.—Wash me yet more and more from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin."

The second, and I might say the principal event, commemorated in this day's festival is her majestic introduction into heaven and her taking possession of the throne from which she was ever after to rule as Queen of all God's creation. The dazzling magnificence of that gorgeous pageant is as far beyond the descriptive powers of our language as the sanctity of the Blessed Virgin is beyond the grasp of the most subtle intelligence. Her sanctity was surpassed by the uncreated sanctity of God alone, and its effulgence outshone that of all the other saints and angels put together. "Mons domus Domini," says the Prophet, "in vertice montium.—The mountain house of God, on the top of the mountain." This mountain house of God is the Blessed Virgin, who is called in the Litany of Loretto the Domus Aurea, or Golden House, because it was in this house God took up his dwelling after coming down from heaven. This house is on the top of the mountains; that is, above the aggregated sanctities of all the saints combined. To this the Psalmist alludes when he says: "Fundamenta ejus in montibus sanctis: her foundations are on the holy mountains;" that is, on those heights where the sanctities of all the other saints cease, there the sanctity of the Mother of God commences. Hence she was a very marvel of holiness in

the eyes of those flaming seraphim who stand immediately around the throne of God. It is no wonder, then, that the angels were bewildered at seeing an object so resplendent with grace and beauty rising up from this earth of ours, this place of exile, this miserable little atom of creation, and that as they leaned over the battlements of heaven to gaze at her beauty, they should ask one another: "Who is this that cometh forth from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning on her spouse?" St. Bonaventure tells us that God came to the gates of heaven to meet her. He receives and welcomes her with the greatest honor, affection and enthusiasm, and amidst the rapturous acclamations of the whole celestial hierarchy, which rang and reverberated along the vaulted firmament and shook the very foundations of that heavenly city, he escorts her to her throne, places on her head her well-merited crown and proclaims her Queen of Angels, Queen of Patriarchs and Prophets, Queen of Martyrs and Confessors, Queen of all Saints. "And a great sign," says St. John, "appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." Then the great Archangel taking his golden trumpet proclaimed to all the citizens of that happy realm: "Thus shall she be honored whom the King hath a mind to honor." And the whole multitude cried out with one voice: "Now is come salvation and strength and the Kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ." (Apoc. xii: 10.) As we ponder over these things, we naturally feel our hearts inflamed with the desire of joining that joyous and blessed company. Shall we ever intermingle with those sweet, beautiful souls, the glorified servants of Mary; shall our eyes ever feast on the loveliness of our blessed mother's gentle face; shall

our voices ever swell that chorus which is chanting those never-ending magnificats around Mary's throne? May God grant that we may all be saved. Heaven is a great prize, and we must contend bravely for it. The struggle will at times be great, but we must never surrender. We must have courage, knowing that we are not alone in the fight. The Blessed Virgin is most interested in us; she will stand by and aid us. Let us, then, have the greatest confidence in her; let us appeal to her morning, noon and night; let us often repeat that beautiful prayer of St. Bernard: "Remember, oh most pious Virgin, that it was never heard of in any age that those who implored thy powerful protection were ever abandoned by thee. I therefore, oh sacred Virgin, animated with the most lively confidence, cast myself at thy sacred feet, most earnestly and fervently beseeching thee to adopt me, though a wretched sinner, for thy perpetual child, to take care of my eternal salvation, and to watch over me at the hour of death. Oh do not, mother of the word incarnate, despise my prayer, but graciously hear and obtain the object of my petition."

St. Joseph.

"*When Mary, his Mother, was espoused to Joseph * * * she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.*"

—St. Matt : i : 18.

There is very little known of Saint Joseph. The details of his life have been so meagerly imparted to us that he may almost be reckoned among the hidden Saints of God. The Holy Scriptures, however, by calling him a just man, give us some idea of those marvelous heights of sanctity to which God has elevated him. When we call a man just, we, of course, speak in the limited signification of the word, but when the Spirit of Truth applies the term to a man, it is to be understood as embracing all that can possibly be implied in its meaning. Hence, the learned St. Jerome tells us that he was called just on account of his perfect possession of all virtues; not because he possessed one virtue or two virtues, but all virtues, and those too, in a most sublime degree. This, surely, is a great eulogium, but it does not astonish us. Indeed, no words can astonish us that are used to express the awful splendors of his sanctity, when we reflect that he, among all men, was selected for the unique dignity of being the spouse of the Most Holy Virgin and the Foster-father of her Divine Son. In the first place the fact of his being the spouse of the Blessed Virgin sheds a flood of light into our minds concerning his character, revealing treasures of grace found in no one else. Although he lived in the most perfect chastity with Mary, he was, nevertheless her husband, being united to her by the holy

bands of wedlock. Invisible ties so bound them together, that their souls seemed to have but one indivisible existence and their feelings, thoughts and aspirations appeared to spring from the same source. Now, it is not reasonable to suppose that God would permit one to hold such high and holy relations with His Virgin Mother unless that person approached most nearly the perfection of holiness which distinguished her. When God, therefore, decreed to make St. Joseph the spouse of the Blessed Virgin, He must have determined at the same time to so enrich his soul with all spiritual gifts and so cumulate within it graces upon graces that he might become a suitable partner for so holy a personage. On this account we do not deem it at all improbable that Joseph not only enjoyed the privilege of the Baptist, and was sanctified in his mother's womb, but that he was confirmed in grace, and so freed from even the possibility of sin.

The many rare virtues thus planted by omnipotence in the garden of his soul were stimulated to a most vigorous growth by the prayers of Mary. She prayed for him with a fervor equalled only by the love she bore him, and never did a wife love a husband with such an affection as that which she entertained for St. Joseph. One that had such a place in the heart of the Mother of God, must have been not only holy, but much holier than any other creature. We must arrive at this same conclusion regarding Joseph's sanctity, when we consider the high position held by Mary in the kingdom of her Son. If she rules as Queen in the Court of Heaven, what other position could Joseph hold, save one that is next to her own. That he should be less resplendent in merits or glory than any of her servants is a supposition that our sense of consistency forbids

us to entertain. He is therefore above all the saints of earth, above the angels and archangels, next to Mary herself.

The sanctity of St. Joseph can likewise, with equal facility, be established by considering his relations with the Incarnate Word. We naturally expect to see a man's countenance, his very expression and image reflected in the face of his son. Now, although St. Joseph was simply the Foster-father of Jesus Christ, still, we may reasonably suppose that in the face of the latter could be traced those same lines, the self-same features, that characterized the countenance of St. Joseph. Now, if there was such a wonderful resemblance between those two blessed faces, may we not, with great propriety, believe that grace was poured forth in such abundance on the soul of this great Patriarch, that people, seeing the extraordinary virtues of the Son, would, without hesitation, regard them in the light of an inheritance received from his Father.

Our judgment on the holiness of St. Joseph is confirmed and sustained by the evidence of that trite but truthful saying, "Tell me your company and I'll tell you who you are." The many years which Joseph passed in the company of Jesus and Mary were years of gigantic spiritual growth, when his sanctity went on intensifying with such rapidity as to be beyond the calculations of even an angel's intellect. As the amount of heat communicated is greater in proportion to the intensity of the fire and one's nearness to it, we should be lost in amazement in even attempting to grasp the measure of Joseph's godliness, when we reflect that he lived so long and in such close proximity to those burning furnaces of Divine Charity, the sacred

Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Yes, his great soul must have glowed with such a white heat of love as could not be sustained by the ardent nature of a flaming seraph.

Very appropriately, therefore, does Saint Bernardine of Siena represent St. Joseph as occupying one of those two thrones in heaven which were the objects of the ambition of the wife of Zebedee. This good woman, as you remember, filled with a most maternal affection for her two sons whom she wished to have placed in the most exalted positions in heaven, graciously approached our Saviour and besought him to decree, that her two sons might sit, the one on His right and the other on His left, in His future kingdom. To this request, however, Jesus had to refuse consent, because, said he: "To sit on my right or left hand is not mine to give you, but to them for whom it is prepared by my Father." Those two seats of honor then are not now occupied by the sons of Zebedee, but one is filled by the Ever Blessed Mother of God herself, and the other by St. Joseph.

All these considerations should not only convince us of his supereminent sanctity, but should induce us also to create and foster an active and vigorous devotion to this holy Patriarch, and to have the most supreme confidence in his intercession. His power with Jesus Christ is very great. The omnipotent God who, as a little child, obeyed his every command, yields to him still a like obedience and gratifies his every wish. The devotedness and zeal with which St. Joseph guarded him, worked and toiled for him, constitute a debt of gratitude which Jesus can never forget and which he knows well how to repay. Hence the great Gerson was perfectly correct when he said,

that the requests which St. Joseph makes to Jesus Christ are more in the nature of a command than a prayer: "Imperium est, non oratio." It is also well for us to recollect that this wonderful power of assisting us, which St. Joseph has, is not limited to any special class of favors, but extends to all the range of human wants. Some saints, as we are told by St. Thomas, are distinguished by their power to render us special assistance under certain circumstances, but to St. Joseph is granted the power to relieve us in every want and in every trouble, both temporal and spiritual.

Whenever, therefore, you desire any grace or favor from Heaven, go to St. Joseph and ask him for it. He can and will obtain for you anything at all, provided it is not injurious to your soul's salvation. In your devotion to him, you will no doubt be greatly encouraged by the words of St. Theresa. "I do not," says she, "remember ever to have asked anything of God by him which I did not obtain. I never knew any one who by invoking him did not advance exceedingly in virtue, for he assists in a wonderful manner all who address themselves to him." But it is not alone in asking favors of St. Joseph that our devotion to him must show itself; it should appear especially in our constant endeavor to imitate the virtues that were rooted in his great soul. His love of Jesus and Mary should, in the first place, be a perpetual, unceasing incentive to our spiritual ambition. Their presence with him was like a torrent of joy, inundating his soul with those indescribable pleasures that are known only to the friends of God, and their simple words falling on his ear had the effect of the most charming music. The very thought of them filled his mind by day and formed the pleasing subject of his dreams by

night. His own soul did not seem to belong to him. It appeared to have disentangled itself from its natural restraints and to have embedded itself in the hallowed existences of Jesus and Mary. No labor was hard, nothing was difficult, nothing disagreeable, when it was done for them. With the greatest willingness and joy would he have undergone the most racking torments and the most cruel death if by these means he could increase in the slightest degree the intense love he bore them.

Alas, my brethren, what a difference between St. Joseph and ourselves in this matter of the love of Jesus and Mary! We think a great deal of worldly comforts, of money, of pleasures and of honors, but of Jesus and Mary we think very little. Enthusiasm never inspires us to an act which would please them. On the contrary, when solicited or urged to do something of the kind, such as to go to confession or communion, or to give of our substance to the poor or to the orphans, repugnance is immediately pictured on our faces. If actions are the measure of love, our conduct does not certainly indicate any regard for Jesus and Mary. But no matter what the past may have been, the future, I trust, will prove that the example and the prayers of St. Joseph shall have changed our hearts and inspired us with more worthy sentiments towards our Saviour and his Blessed Mother.

Besides the love of St. Joseph for Jesus and Mary, his deep humility and his contempt of the world should form for us the subject of salutary reflections. His position was one of the greatest we can conceive, and yet he was the humblest of men. He finds himself so circumstanced as to be obeyed, not only by the Immaculate Virgin, the Queen of Angels and Saints, but

also by the Son of God himself, at whose command all creation sprang into existence, and by whose power all things preserve their being; and yet, notwithstanding all this, no vainglorious thoughts take possession of his soul, but on the contrary a sense of his own unworthiness fills him with confusion. That he should have been chosen for the office he occupied, was ever to him a matter that he could not comprehend. Allied to this profound humility was his sincere contempt for the world and the things of the world. He could boast of royal blood and of a long line of illustrious ancestors, and yet family pride gives him not a thought; and just as the glory and achievements of the past awoke within his soul no sentiments of a personal consideration, so the wealth and rank of the great ones who surrounded him were powerless to draw towards them either his company or his admiration. The transitory things of life melted into insignificance before the great thought of God, which was ever employing the powers of his soul. When we undertake to inspect and consider the sentiments and impulses of our hearts in regard to ourselves and this world, what an immeasurable difference do we find between us and St. Joseph. Instead of being convinced of our condition as poor, dependent, circumscribed little creatures, we are continually giving ourselves an importance which does not belong to ourselves, and are swelling with the thought of our own greatness, when in fact we are nothing at all. We have a very kind way of looking at ourselves. In our own estimation we have few faults, although we see plenty of them in our neighbor. Perfection is the unfailing embellishment of ourselves and our actions, and we take great pains to let all creation know it. Then, too, how fondly we lean towards the maxims, the ways and

the customs of the world. We are dazzled by its glittering tinsel. Wealth, especially, is not only the aim of our life, but we have the most profound respect for those who possess it. We are charmed by their smiles and we boast of their friendship. Poverty, on the contrary, we look upon as a disgrace, and we want to have nothing to do with the poor. This surely is not the spirit that animated St. Joseph, and if we wish to imitate him, we must root it out of our souls. His prayers will, I am certain, give us powerful assistance in our endeavors to accomplish such a praiseworthy work.

There is yet another trait in the character of our Saint to which we may very profitably direct our attention, and that is his ever ready submission to the will of God. His humble position in life, with the many inconveniences and many distressing wants it implied, and the arduous manual labor that it demanded, was not to him a subject of murmering or complaint, but rather the occasion of heartfelt gratitude and thanks to Almighty God. All the events and circumstances that marked his existence he knew to be directed or allowed by a wise Providence for a good purpose, and that was sufficient to make him always most thoroughly contented and happy. It would be well, indeed, if we, like St. Joseph, could detect the finger of God in all that befalls us, or takes place around us. The philosophy of our daily history would then contain no dark, inexplicable mysteries, and every cloud shading our pathway would have a silver lining. To know how to say, "Fiat voluntas tua—May Thy holy will be done," when misfortunes crowd upon and almost overwhelm us, when enemies arise to belie us and ruin us, when some malignant disease is gnawing away at the vitals of

our existence, or when the hand of death deals out desolation and sorrow in our happy homes—to know, I say, how to be submissive to God's holy will under all these and similar trials, is a habit which if we should acquire, would take from life half its bitterness and make it really worth living. May God, in His mercy, grant us this grace.

In conclusion, my dear brethren, let each and every one of us resolve, that from this day forward we will take the great St. Joseph for our patron and guide. Let us think of him frequently, and try to please him, not only by offering to him the homage of some daily prayer, but especially by copying in our life the virtues for which he was remarkable. In all our troubles and in all our wants, let us go to him, as we would to a good, kind father, who will be delighted to see us and feel most happy in satisfying all our wishes. Among the many favors that we may ask of him, there is *one* that we must ever insist upon with extraordinary fervor and that is the grace of a happy death. We must try to die like St. Joseph. When his hour had arrived Jesus and Mary were at his bedside. Their presence and their words consoled and cheered him, so that instead of dying in an agony of pain and of sorrow, his soul went forth into the hands of its Creator in an ecstasy of joy. "Moriatur anima mea morte justorum et fiant novissima mea similia illorum.—May my soul die the death of the just, and may my last end be like unto theirs." Let us hope, my dear friends, that we all may, through the intercession of St. Joseph, be favored with a most happy death, and that, when that event is to take place, he, together with our Blessed Redeemer Jesus Christ and the Most Holy Virgin Mary, may be near us to receive our last sigh and conduct us safely to our heavenly home.

All Saints.

"After this I saw a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne."

—Apoc. vii: 9.

The Syrian King, wishing to capture the Prophet Eliseus, sent horses and chariots and the strength of his army (IV. Kings, vi: 14) to the city where the holy man was stopping. "And the servant of the man of God," as the Scriptures tell us, "rising early went out and saw an army round about the city, and horses and chariots, and he told him, saying: 'Alas! alas! alas! my lord, what shall we do?' But he answered: 'Fear not, for there are more with us than with them.' And Eliseus prayed and said, 'Lord open his eyes, that he may see.' And the Lord opened the eyes of the servant and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Eliseus." If our eyes were opened like those of the Prophet's servant, brethren, we should be surprised to see the number of blessed spirits that are continually watching over us and displaying the most intense and unabated interest in our welfare. Not only the vast angelic hierarchy, but every soul that has left this vale of tears to enjoy the vision of God is a friend of ours. Of the number of such friends, of their various classes and grades, of the untold varieties of their beauty and power, we cannot form even the faintest conception. They are there from all quarters of the earth, from every nation, tribe, and tongue. There are those little

infants that perished by the sword of Herod, and those, who, having been washed in the waters of baptism, were taken away, lest wickedness should alter their understandings or deceit beguile their souls. They were too lovely for this wicked world, and God took them to Himself. There, too, are those bands of white-roded virgins whose privilege it is to follow the Lamb wherever he goes: there are those majestic groups of venerable confessors with the light of God's holy love beaming strongly on their calm and peaceful countenance: there are the blood-stained legions of martyrs, their temples wreathed with the olive leaf, and palm branches in their hands: there are holy priests, from whose innermost souls shine out the bewildering splendors of their priestly character while their sacerdotal robes are fragrant with the odors of the sacrifices which they have so often offered. There likewise are holy men and holy women, fathers and mothers, who carried out most faithfully the duties of their state, who loved and served God themselves and taught their children to do the same. They were unknown, perhaps, to even their next door neighbors; they were, it may have been, poor, and afflicted and looked down upon with contempt, but they finally won eternal glory by their practice of virtue and by their patience in the hour of trial. But highest, above all, next to the very throne of God, is seen Heaven's great Queen, wielding a scepter of grace and mercy. Although ranking as a creature, the uncreated alone can adequately describe her. Having a nature that swells with the energies and is stamped with the very patent of the Deity, she is like the lovely chef d'œuvre of the Grecian artist, exhibiting in one glow of associated beauty the pride of every model and the perfection of

every master. We are aware of no combination of words to express the degree of magnificence which surrounds her, and yet, notwithstanding her exalted dignity and her unspeakable grandeur, she never forgets us, her poor, wayward children, but ever loves and prays for us. That great multitude also, of the Blest who are always chanting the praises of God around Mary's throne and look up to and honor her as their queen, imitate the charity she manifests towards us and pray for us with unremitting fervor. Truly this doctrine of the Communion of Saints is a cheering feature in the great system of the world's redemption. When calamities, adversities, and bitter disappointments cast us down and overshadow our souls with gloom, our hearts naturally go out to seek for sympathy from our fellow men, for sympathy to the heart-sore is as a soothing balm to the wounded. In the Communion of Saints we have sympathy in abundance, and sympathy, too, of a very practical nature. All the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem sympathize with us. They know our temptations, they know our troubles, they understand thoroughly the nature of the warfare waged against our souls, they have measured our weakness and compared it with the strength and the stratagems of the enemy, they lean over the battlements of heaven to watch and encourage us and they turn their ears earthward to catch the first shout of our victory. They never cease crying out to the Lord in our behalf. To those who, notwithstanding the beauty of this doctrine and its harmony with the wants of our nature, would call it in question, relegating it among the dreams of a poetic imagination, we can show the indubitable proofs of its divine origin. We have examples in the Scriptures of Angels inter-

esting themselves in the affairs of men. In one place we hear the Arch-angel Raphael relating to Tobias how he offered the prayers of the latter to the Lord. "When thou didst pray," said he, "with tears and didst bury the dead and didst leave thy dinner and hide the dead by day in thy house and bury them by night, I offered thy prayer to the Lord." In the vision of Zaccharias too, we hear the Angel praying for mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judea. "O Lord of Hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judea, with which thou hast been angry: this is now the seventieth year." Besides being authorized by the Scriptures, this doctrine was taught and believed in the very first ages of the Christiun Faith. We see it in the writings of the Fathers and in the liturgy of the Church: we observe it in the Acts of the Martyrs and among the inscriptions placed on the tombs of the dead. Reason itself finally comes forth to confirm what is abundantly proved from other sources. As prayer for our fellow mortals is a characteristic of even that imperfect charity we find in this world, it must necessarily form a very active ingredient in that perfection of love which holy souls enjoy in the bosom of God. That the saints, then, intercede for us, we cannot doubt. It is equally certain that we can pray to them and that they listen to our petitions. For one man to ask the prayers of a fellow mortal living like himself in this place of probation implies no impropriety and no infraction of the natural or revealed law of God. St. Paul did this more than once, and St. James tells those to whom he writes "to pray for one another that they may be saved." If then there is nothing objectionable in asking the prayers of a man who is yet a way-

farer in this life, our petitions will not become unlawful because he is transferred to Heaven. It may, indeed, be asked how the saints can hear us being so far away. Our answer is that there is more joy in Heaven upon one sinner doing penance than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance, and that consequently there must be some way by which our affairs are made known to them. It is, perhaps, one of the properties of glory to see and hear the most distant things; it may be that God communicates such knowledge to the saints as he formerly revealed to the Prophets the things of the future.

Now the teachings of the Catholic Church on the invocation and the intercession of the saints, should lead us naturally to be grateful to God for His admirable goodness in giving us so many powerful friends to assist us in the great affairs of our salvation. To be saved is a difficult thing. It often implies a great deal of hard and uphill work. To reach the citadel of glory we must fight our way inch by inch. The world, the flesh and the devil bear down hard upon us, and we sometimes feel as if we must strike our colors and give up the contest. It is well that we have the saints to stand by us to encourage and assist us. To them, then, we must often have recourse for that seasonable aid they are so capable of giving us. But we must do something else besides asking their prayers. We must try to imitate the lives they led upon earth, that we, too, may one day be saints and reach that happiness and glory which they now enjoy in heaven. Now the expression, to become a saint, is something that needs explanation: A saint, if I am not mistaken, is very often supposed to be a person having a nature entirely different from that of the rest of mortals: one who

cures the sick, raises the dead to life, and foretells the future, and whose lengthy prayers and continuous fasting make his existence seem an object of the deepest wonder. Extraordinary things, indeed, are often made manifest in the lives of holy men and holy women, but it is not these things which make them holy. The pith and essence of sanctity is to be looked for elsewhere. It consists in doing the will of God, and that was the greatest saint who excelled most in this respect. To become a saint, therefore, simply means to discover the will of God, and when found to carry it out to the very best of our ability. Now the will of God becomes very plain and unmistakable by the duties and the circumstances of that position in life to which Providence has assigned to us. The common laborer who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow, the busy merchant, the priest, the mother of a family, the servant girl, all have their specific duties, the faithful performance of which will render their doers saints. It is consequently a great mistake for any of us to ascribe our holiness or lack of holiness to the fact that we are not in a different state of life to which God never called us, or to the absence of some circumstances in which Providence never intended to place us.

Besides, then, praying to the saints we will try to imitate them and become saints ourselves by doing all the ordinary actions of our life in a most extraordinary manner. To do this the more efficaciously we should every morning when we rise from our beds consecrate all the acts of the coming day to God, offering them to him and wishing to perform them from the sole motive of pleasing his divine majesty. "Whether you eat or drink," says St. Paul, "or whatsoever else

you do, do all to the glory of God." To this pious and salutary practice we should join the habit of discern ing God's providence, not only in the many graces and blessings, but in all the evils and afflictions that are strewn along our path through life. Whether these come from poverty or sickness, from the treachery of enemies or the coldness of friends, from the disappointments and struggles of life, they are all sent or at least permitted by a kind, good Father. We should bear them, therefore, with resignation, and try to derive from them all the benefit they are expected to confer. It is needless for me to state what will be the termination of a life so sanctified, or to attempt to describe the reward of a soul whose every moment was thus spent in the services of its Maker. When about to quit this earthly habitation, God himself will rise from his golden throne, and surrounded by all the choirs of the blest will go forth to meet her, and as he will throw open the portals of glory to her astonished gaze, he will address her in these consoling words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

St. Patrick's Day.

"Remember your prelates who have spoken the Word of God to you."

—Heb. xiii : 7.

To-day is the day of days for Ireland and for Irishmen. It is a day on which their faith and their patriotism unite to celebrate a grand anniversary; it is a day which ever makes their blood run with fresher vigor and lights up on their countenances that smile of an inward happiness that appears the more beautiful amidst their nation's present wrongs and sufferings; it is a day on which every Irishman, the world-wide over, thinks with love of his own dear, native Isle.

The love of one's country is an instinct planted by nature's own hand in every human heart, but in the Irishman the love of Ireland seems to be an affection more than ordinarily rooted, a germ fragrant with the richest enthusiasm. Wherever he wanders his heart is ever in the Isle of the West. Ploughing the surges of the sea, or wasting away his manhood in the red-coated cohorts of Britain, hewing or delving in the vast expanses of America, or sweating in the harvest fields of England, his thoughts are continually straying back to the lovely valleys of his Fatherland. Its vision floats through his dreams by night and by day, it is the theme that never fails to entertain. Oh, yes, the Irish love their native soil, and why should they not love it? It is the land where their sainted

fathers sleep, where their cradles were rocked, and where they first knelt at their mother's knee and learned to lisp the Hail Mary. It is the land where they spent the sunny hours of childhood and where lie all the fair scenes of their youth, the hills and the meadows over which they sported before their hearts had tasted of the bitterness of life, and the little chapel by the roadside with its sacred memories, the holy altar before which they so often prayed, and the venerable Priest whose countenance they so well remember, whose admonitions were so salutary and whose approval was so encouraging. May it never be that they forget that land, that land so prolific of cheering recollections, the land of the beautiful and the brave, the land of the minstrel, the sage and the saint, the home of all that is lovely and endearing. It is this deep-seated love of their native land joined to a keen appreciation of their time-honored religion that brings them to-day to the temple of their God to adore at the altar of their fathers, and it is the same sentiment that makes them eager on this Festival to hear the priest speak of Ireland's conversion and of the life and labors of her great apostle.

And now since it is my pleasing duty to pronounce his eulogium before you, how can I better commence than by speaking of the faith which he has bequeathed to his children. If Ireland has not been blessed with worldly prosperity, she certainly has been amply recompensed with the gift of faith. Her Catholicity is proverbial. To be Irish means to be Catholic, to be Irish and not Catholic always looks anomalous. This faith seems to be fixed in the very soil, and the hearts of the people is where it blooms. The holy wells reflect its celestial beauty, the atmosphere is redolent

of the odors of its presence, and the language of the country re-echoes the soothing music of its heavenly inspirations. Knowing full well the value of the treasure she possesses nothing has been able to wrest it from her. She was the only country north of the Alps on whom the demon of heresy in the sixteenth century could not cast his blighting shadow. Error, indeed, after transforming its victim into an emissary sent him to her shores, but she shook off the viper with contempt and disgust.

For her fidelity to the faith, what has she not had to suffer? She was stripped of every freeman's right, education for her was made a crime and her worship was declared a felony. Apostate tyrants brought her, as they called it, the gospel of heaven, but she knew that it was the message of perdition. They commanded her to change her creed, and when she like the saints of old, refused, they starved her, they struck her with the sword and made her bite the very dust. It would seem, naturally speaking, as if her faith and her nationality must perish forever under the heavy hand of oppression and that nothing but ruined abbeys and desecrated altars would remain to tell the story of the past. But she has survived the storm which threatened her existence, her faith has come forth unscathed from the conflict, and, to-day, exerts its energies as if it never knew disaster. "The course of ages," says a French writer, "has not interrupted her devotion to the faith, the most bloody and implacable of persecutions has not shaken it, the defection of all Northern Europe has not led her astray, and she maintains still amid the splendors of Modern Civilization and Anglo-Saxon supremacy an inextinguishable center of faith, where survives along with

the completest orthodoxy, that admirable purity of manners which no conqueror and no adversary has ever been able to dispute, to equal or diminish." To her we can very aptly apply those words of the Psalmist (xxxii), "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he hath chosen for his inheritance." Truly, God must have heard that fervent petition that went forth from the heart of her great apostle. "Quapropter," he prayed, "non contingat mihi a Deo meo ut unquam amittam plebem suam quam acquisivi in ultimis terris. Wherefore may it never happen to me from my God that I should lose his people whom I have converted in the ends of the earth." May the effects of that prayer always continue, may the faith of Ireland ever be her glory, may its bright light never wane, never till the Atlantic wave shall cease to lash her bold promontories, till the winds of heaven shall forget to play around her mountain ridges, till the sun shall no more send forth his genial rays and the earth feel no longer the pulsations of human life.

But the faith which she guarded so well was not for her benefit alone. It was her mission to communicate its blessings to other nations and to other people. "The service of truth," says the late eloquent Bishop of Orleans, "and the regeneration of souls, such is the vocation of the children of Ireland." Led on by the prospect of better times and fairer fortunes, they leave their homes and their firesides and go forth into the world, bearing in their bosoms the precious deposit that is destined to beautify the land of the stranger. They thus unknowingly are executing great designs of Providence, much like the little birds transporting in their bills the seed from which vast trees are yet to

spring. Their mission is very similar to that which was given in olden times to the people of God. For as the children of Abraham were chosen to perpetuate the recollection of a future redeemer and to keep alive the worship of the true God amidst the adverse influences of paganism, so in modern times, when the spirit of the world is exerting so powerful a sway, the Irish people have been selected to be the beacon-light of faith, and to exhibit to the nations all the beauty and loveliness of God's sacred revelations. Wherever they go, therefore, they do not hang up their organs on the willow trees and sit down and weep, as the captives of old on the rivers of Babylon, but they joyfully sing the songs of Sion in the land of their exile. Religion flourishes at their coming: sanctuaries are erected to the Lord of Hosts, and the Dagon of heresy crumbles before the ark of the Lord. Mark the progress of their efforts in Australia. See what they have effected for England, a country through which, in return for insult and misery, they are now spreading the light of the Gospel as they once did the treasures of science. But would you know what they are doing in America? In imagination let your eyes scan the space between the granite rocks of the East and the distant coast washed by the Pacific, between the lakes on the north and the gulf which receives the waters of the Mississippi on the South. Everywhere you will see the cross shining out in bold relief against the sky, everywhere casting its shadow on its friends and its enemies. As said the ancient Christian Apologist, so might they say now, "Hesterni sumus. —We are but of yesterday, and yet we fill the land, not only with our numbers, but with our churches and every sort of religious institutions."

We have spoken of the people in general: what is now to be said of Ireland's priests? The illustrious Dupanloup will tell us. "Rome sends them," says he, "and at the voice of Peter they go like angels prompt and quick to carry the good news to those who await it." "Ah, without doubt," he continues, "it is not their merchants but their missionaries we find everywhere. The merchants are of another nation, but the priests, the apostles, the peaceful conquerors, the true civilizers are the Irish." Bound by their calling to the most arduous of duties, they are in a measure repaid by the affection and devotedness of their countrymen. The love and the profound respect which the Irish bear their priest is something that everybody must see and every true Christian must admire. They look upon him as no ordinary person, they discern something supernatural in his very frame, they esteem him as a man of God, an ambassador of Christ. Because they are essentially a religious people he is the great center round which their majestic worship revolves. He is their guide in doubt, and in sorrow he is their consoler. His visits to a family are always welcomed and hailed with joy, whilst his presence at the sickbed fills the dying with courage, peace and resignation.

Now turning our thoughts from the present, let us look back on the past of this Catholic nation. The history of her conversion to Christianity is bound up with the life of her great apostle, the details of which are calculated to interest us all, those who are not so immediately related to him as well as those to whom circumstances of birth and education have made his name most dear. St. Patrick was born in the latter part of the fourth century, and as his birthplace is a

matter of dispute among scholars, I will venture no opinion on the subject. In his baptism he was christened Succath, a word which signifies warlike, his present name, Patrick, being afterwards given him by Pope Celestine I. When he was about the age of sixteen he fell into the hands of certain robbers or pirates, who carried him off a captive to Ireland, where he was sold to a petty prince in Ulster. In the confession which he has left us, he speaks of this event with much simplicity and pathos. "I was then," he says, "almost sixteen. I was ignorant of the true God, and I was brought to Ireland in captivity with many thousands of men, according to our merits, because we had gone away from God and had not complied with his precepts, and had not been obedient to our parents who were admonishing us concerning our salvation. And the Lord sent his anger upon us, and dispersed us anong many nations, even to the ends of the earth, and there the Lord discovered to me a sense of my incredulity, that I should, though late, remember my sins and be converted with my whole heart to the Lord my God." Further on he tells us in the same unaffected, simple way how he spent the time of his bondage. "After I had come to Ireland," he continues, "I daily fed the flocks and prayed frequently in the day. My love of God and my fear of Him became greater and greater. My faith increased and my spirit increased, so that in one day I said a hundred prayers, and in the night almost as many. Whilst I tarried in the woods and on the mountains I was aroused before daybreak to prayer in snow and in frost and in rain, nor did I find any inconvenience in it, nor was there any slothfulness in me then as I now see, for my spirit was fervent within me." Having passed six years

in captivity, he at length made his escape and was taken on board of a ship, which after a voyage of three days brought him to the coast of Scotland. In his confession he speaks of a second captivity which he underwent, but which lasted only two months. Some time after his arrival home among his friends he saw in a vision or a dream a man whose name was Victorinus coming, as it were, from Ireland and bringing with him a number of letters. One of these he gave to Patrick, who perceived that it commenced with the words "Vox Hiberionacum," or the "Voice of the Irish People." "And whilst I was reading," said he, "the beginning of the letter, I thought at that moment that I heard the voice of those people who lived near Foclut forest, and they cried out as with one voice: "We beseech thee, O holy youth, to come and walk among us. At this I was greatly touched, and I could read no farther and so I awoke." After having determined to return to the land of his captivity to labor for the conversion of its inhabitants, he set about preparing himself for his mission. Some time later we find him in Rome. What thoughts must have filled his mind as he dwelt in that great city, remarkable alike for its pagan glory and its intimate connection with the Church of God. As he passed by the Campus Martius he heard not the heavy tramp of those legions which in bygone days had there celebrated countless victories. As he paused at the pillared solitude of the Forum, no Tully was there captivating men by his eloquence. The golden age of Augustus had passed away, and Rome, once so grand and imposing, was rapidly falling in ruins under the pressure of time and the incursions of the Northmen. But if the contrast between the Rome of his day and that of the past taught him

the emptiness of life and the folly of being attached to transitory things, there were memories lingering around the Seven Hills that animated him with Christian fortitude and apostolic zeal. Wherever he gazed his eye rested on some chronicled history of a saint; wherever he went his feet pressed the vestiges of sanctity. Now he stands by the spot where St. Peter was crucified with his head downwards, or he lingers near the scene of St. Paul's martyrdom. Now he gathers inspiration from the places where Lawrence arrayed the poor before the Roman official who was desirous of seeing the treasures of the Church, or where the same holy deacon afterwards met his death by being broiled on a gridiron. Again it is before the Colisseum he stands, whose walls had yet been untouched by the ruthless hands of the Barbarini, and gazing in silence on its colossal dimensions thinks with admiration of the many martyrs whose generous blood had so profusely crimsoned its vast arena, and especially does he recall the intrepid Ignatius, who was there devoured by lions.

At length having been consecrated and sent to Ireland, the immense success which crowned his labors is beyond all comparison. Full of the spirit of the Apostles, he spared himself in nothing to gain over all to Christ. Everywhere he went he preached by word and example, and the halls of Tara, the abodes of the great and the noble, told of the effects which his words had wrought. Idolatry melted away before him, and virtues of every kind budded, bloomed and flourished in all their fair proportions, throughout the length and breadth of the land. "Ireland," says Montalembert, "that virgin island on which Pro-Consul never set foot, which never knew either the orgies or the exactions of

Rome, was also the only place in the world of which the Gospel took possession without bloodshed. . . . From the moment that this green Erin had seen the sun of faith rise upon her, she had vowed herself to it with an ardent and tender devotion which became her very life." St. Patrick at length, having, as it is said, built 365 churches, consecrated almost as many bishops, and ordained nearly 3,000 priests, went to receive the reward of his labors at the ripe old age of 120. Here we must notice the blessings that attended St. Patrick, above all others who may have preached in Ireland before him. That the gospel was announced there even before the time of Palladius we have reason to believe, and yet it was reserved by Divine Providence to St. Patrick alone to convert the island, and to gather its inhabitants into the one fold of the true Shepherd. "Not to Palladius," as an old saying has it, "but to St. Patrick did God give the Irish."

The work which he commenced ceased not with his death, but went on so flourishingly that Marianus Scotus, in his chronicles in the year 674, remarks that Ireland was filled with saints and holy men.

The number of monasteries which sprang up and the innumerable souls that filled them, constitute also a remarkable feature in the early Christianity of this Catholic country. "The Thebaid reappeared in Ireland," says a great French scholar, "and the West had no longer anything to envy in the history of the East." This same fact the German historian, Gorres, takes notice of in the following words: "When we look into the ecclesiastical life of this people, we are almost tempted to believe that some potent spirits transported over the sea the cells of the Valley of the Nile with all their hermits, its monasteries with all their inmates."

In speaking of the rise and progress of monasticism in Ireland, we must not pass on without paying the tribute of our respect and affection to Ireland's lovely daughter, Bridget, abbess of Kildare. Her name, indeed, in these our days has become a byword of contempt and the vehicle of a sneer, and Irish people, unfortunately allowing themselves to be swayed by the ignorance or the prejudices of others, seem to be growing averse to its use. They no longer bestow it on their children at the baptismal font, and young women who had been honored with it almost blush at its very mention, and therefore try to conceal it under some high sounding synonym that better suits their corrupted taste. That this beautiful name is so little esteemed by those who should prize it so highly, is indeed a thing I sincerely regret. Born in Ireland, Bridget, like our Apostle, was in her early days a slave, Wishing to abandon the world, she took the veil and chose for her retreat a spot once sacred to the Druids' rites. The cell which she there erected, taking its name from the locality, was called Kil-dara, a term which at this day designates the present County Kildare. With the young women who had gathered around her to follow her example on the road to perfection, she established a nunnery, which was the first community of the kind Ireland had ever witnessed, and which afterwards became the motherhood of many similar institutions throughout the country, From what we know of St. Bridget she must have been sweetness itself. Kind-hearted, tender and compassionate, her soul always burned with an ardent love of God and her neighbor, well typified by the fire which she enkindled for the use of the poor, and which her charity for them would never allow to be extinguished.

St. Patrick may represent Christian and apostolic perfection, but St. Bridget recalls to our minds the inestimable virtues of mercy and charity. What has hitherto been said may give us some idea of the rapid and vigorous growth of Catholicity in Ireland.

But the ardor with which the faith had been embraced and its precepts practiced was rivalled only by the zeal which the children of St. Patrick manifested in making it known to others. They received it gratuitously; they gave it gratuitously. They received it with thanksgiving; they gave it with love and much hardship. Ireland's glory was not then the glory which the nineteenth century loves. She could not boast of being the workshop of nations. She did not spin, nor weave, nor mould iron, nor make pottery for foreign races. She had not ships coming into her harbors deeply laden with the products of other climes and departing heavily freighted with articles of mechanical skill and industry. She had not thousands of her children imprisoned in factories nor condemned to spend their precious lives in the bowels of the earth. Neither was her glory of the military order. Her sons went not abroad to return in triumph with captives, tributes and tattered banners. Armed squadrons did not leave her shores to increase her territory or her wealth. Of none of these things could she boast, but she could boast of something better, in-asmuch as the mind is above the body, knowledge above ignorance, virtue above vice, eternity above time. Her great missionary spirit cannot be better described than in the eloquent language of Montalembert: "A characteristic," says he, "still more distinctive of the Irish Monks, as of all their nation, was the imperious necessity of spreading themselves abroad, of seeking and

carrying knowledge and faith afar and of penetrating into the most distant regions to watch or combat paganism. They covered the land and the seas of the west. Unwearied navigators! They landed on the most distant islands, they overflowed the continent with their successive immigrations, they saw in incessant visions a world, known and unknown, to be conquered for Christ."

Among Ireland's most celebrated missionaries, Columkille holds a most conspicuous place. Nature and grace had united to bestow on him every quality that can dignify a man. He possessed an energy that nothing could subdue, a zeal for God's glory that never flagged and he exercised over himself a watchfulness that was both riged and untiring. Having left his own country he passed over to Scotland, where he preached the gospel with such success to the Picts that he has deserved to be called their Apostle. But we cannot speak of Columkille without speaking of Iona, the island of his heart, as he is said to have called it. This little island, which was presented to him by the Scottish King, is situated towards the west of Scotland and is three miles in length by one in width. Its western side, we are told, was rocky and stern, whilst its eastern boundary was low and accessable. The purple flowers of the beautiful sea-bugloss garnished its shores, and the sturdy sea-holly grew among its cliffs. Luxuriant grasses covered its loamy fields and sheeted its central vallies. The gannet fished along verges and the wild geese rested their weary wings upon its slopes. It was in this delightful place that he erected the monastary which afterwards became a focus of knowledge and sanctity: it was here by his teaching and example that he formed apostles for

Ireland and the Orkneys, for Man, for South Britain and Northumbria. Honored by Kings and respected by Bishops, he became the revered Patriarch of one hundred religious houses. Amidst all his labors, Columkille never forgot the land of his birth. So enthusiastic was his love of Ireland, that, as it is related of him, he ascended an eminence every evening at sunset to look towards the shores of his country. He was engaged in transcribing a manuscript when the time of his death arrived. Turning towards his disciple, "This, he said, "is called the day of rest, and such will it be for me, for it will finish my labors." Then having laid aside his stylus and his manuscript, "let Baithen," he said, "finish the rest." It was the ninth of June, 597, and the summer that smiled on Iona was congenial to the rest that his soul found on that day. Such was the great Columkille, the Apostle of the Picts! Would that we could speak in detail of each one of those holy men who flourished in those times and who like roses plucked from the rose bed were scattered over the world to fill it with their perfume.

But if the spirit of religion took such a hold on the country after the preaching of the gospel, we are happy also to affirm that the lanrels of science likewise decked the youthful brow of the Church in Ireland.

Her schools and her scholars merited for her then a well-deserved reputation. Attracted by the love of knowledge, the stranger sought her peaceful shores to partake of an intellectual feast that no other part of Europe could furnish and after his arrival could very well repeat the words of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon, (III Kings, x. 6): "The report is true which I heard in my own country concerning thy words and concerning thy wisdom. And I did not believe them that told me

till I came myself and saw with my own eyes and found that the half hath not been told me; thy wisdom and thy works exceed the fame which I have heard. Blessed are thy men and blessed are thy servants who stand before thee always and hear thy wisdom."

These reflections suggested by the festival of to-day should not be limited to stirring up in us a commendable pride in belonging to that country evangelized and sanctified by the life and labors of the great St. Patrick. They should inspire us first with a greater zeal in the cause of education. Hence, we must always be among the first to promote any movement in favor of the proper cultivation of the mind and the development of the sciences, and while we labor continually to improve ourselves as far as circumstances will permit, we must let slip no opportunity of instilling into others, especially our children, a love of learning. They should inspire us secondly with a more vehement love of our holy faith. Never should we be ashamed of that faith and never should we do anything to disgrace it. If we believe what it teaches, we must also practice what it commands. We must be loyal to the powers that be, whether ecclesiastical or civil, and faithfully fulfil all the duties which we owe to family and friends, and while we practice virtues that are known only to God, we must shun all those vices which are disgraceful even in the eyes of men. This is the way for us to honor our faith, to honor St. Patrick and all those great and holy men who have merited for our country the appellation of the "Island of Saints."

St. Vincent de Paul.

"Behold a Great Priest."

"The proper study of man is man" is a truth which has a higher significance than is usually ascribed to it. To study man properly is to study him with a view to our own improvement. On this account he should not be presented to our contemplation in a degraded aspect, the pitiable victim of his own untamed and turbulent passions, the filthy receptacle of every hated vice, stripped of honor, of justice and virtue; for as such he is not a man but an abortion, an unseemly wreck, an object of aversion, a subject for tears rather than for study. To study him as we should, he must come up before us arrayed in that vesture of beauty which is nothing else than the love and friendship of God and reflecting in his actions and daily life the perfections of his almighty and beneficent Maker. Objects of such excellence, around which our thoughts cluster with pleasure, and from association with which heaven-born aspirations and purposes crowd upon our souls, are not, we are glad to say, the vapory myths of poetic imaginations, but are real substantial facts, as witness the long list of names in the lives of the saints.

It is the lives of the saints, then, that really constitute the proper study of man. By pondering over the saintly histories of those courageous souls, by analyzing their marvelous characters, and weighing considerately their inmost thoughts and the motives of their actions, we are taught to love those virtues that dignify our lowly nature and are spurred on to the strictest observance of every moral obligation.

Among the many holy men, whose lives would win our admiration and whose spirit would suggest many improvements in our daily conduct, the great St. Vincent de Paul can well claim our attention. Like the Divine Master, going about to do good was his unceasing occupation. Every rank in life, every condition of frail humanity seemed to have a claim on his exuberant charity. The little abandoned infant scarcely a day old and just picked up in the darkness of some secluded street, the rich and the poor, the youthful Levite, the Priest and the mitred Pontiff, all shared in the solicitude of his generous and priestly heart. He was certainly the man of his age, and in our own day his influence makes itself felt everywhere around us. France, noble and magnanimous France, once the pride of the Church and the right arm of the Holy See, the home of so many saints and intrepid missionaries, enjoys the privilege of counting Vincent among her sons. At the foot of the Pyranees, in the west of France, near Dax and about thirty miles above Bayonne, is the little village of Ranquinne which is consecrated in the affections of many by the birth of St. Vincent de Paul. This occurred on the twenty-fourth day of April, 1576. The illustrious and holy Pontiff, Pius V, at whose voice Christian chivalry flew to the defense of European civilization and hurled back the Mussulman Aggressor, and tamed his haughty arrogance at the battle of Lepanto, had just expired and he who is known as the Reformer of the Calendar, Gregory XIII, was ruling in the Chair of Peter. Francis Borgia, the third General of the Jesuits, had gone but four years previously to enjoy the society of his Patron and Guide, St. Ignatius, in the company of the Blessed, aud that wonderful man, St. Philip Neri, was then living and had just obtained

the Papal approbation of his oratory. St. John of the Cross, St. Charles Borromeo the great Archbishop of Milan, St. Lewis Bertrand and St. Theresa were then doing great things for God. St. Francis de Sales was then a bright and beautiful boy of only eleven years. These were some of the illustrious characters whose virtues shed a halo around the period in which our Saint was born.

But if the Church had reason to rejoice in the possession of such children, she had causes of grief in the contemplation of events that were then transpiring. Germany was in a white heat of excitement with the novelties of the new preaching. The Netherlands were being disrupted by those religious dissensions that soon terminated in the separation of Holland from Flanders or the present Kingdom of Belgium. Queen Bess was just commencing her deeds of blood in England, while in France the greatest disorder was prevailing, created by the fanaticism, the conspiracies, the treason, the revolts, the sacrileges and murders of Calvin's disciples, the Huguenots, who by their misdeeds first provoked the massacre of St. Bartholomew on the 24th of August, 1572, and then caused the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1598.

St. Vincent's early childhood was remarkable only for the simple virtues and love of prayer which he then began to develop whilst he was assisting his devoted father. When about the age of twelve he was placed under the care of the Franciscan Friars in the neighboring village of Acq. Under the guidance of those good Fathers he made rapid advancement in piety and learning and showed every day most unmistakable signs of his vocation to the holy priesthood, to which

he was afterwards raised in the twenty-fourth year of his age, in the month of September, 1600.

Some few years after his ordination he met with a misfortune similar to that which once befell the great Apostle of Ireland. He had set set out from Marseilles to travel by water to Narbonne. Everything seemed to promise a prosperous and happy voyage, but the expectations and hopes of the travelers were soon to be blasted. The little vessel which carried our Saint was espied by three Turkish brigantines manned by pirates, who were not long in overtaking and subduing the terror-stricken crew and passengers. After killing the captain, the robbers made captives of all they found on the ship, loaded them with chains and brought them to Tunis to sell them as slaves. Vincent at first fell into the possession of a fisherman who, finding that the salt air was injuring the health of his slave, sold him to an old chemist. The chemist afterwards gave him to one of his nephews, who in turn disposed of him by selling him to a renegade Christian from Nice in Savoy. The purchase of this slave was the luckiest bargain the unfortunate man had ever made. Vincent converted his master and he in turn, restoring Vincent to liberty, they both determined to leave the land of the Infidel and set out for France.

The end of his captivity was likewise the end of what may be called his private life, and his return to his native soil was the beginning of a period of extraordinary activity, extending over a half a century, and replete with the most successful results. The number and greatness of these works, which even at this day challenge the admiration of the civilized world, can be compared only with the profound humility and self-abnegation of him, to whose piety and zeal

they owe their existence. His death, full of peace and hope, was a fitting termination to so holy a life. With his children gathered around him like the patriarch of old, he calmly expired on the 27th of September, 1660, in the eighty-fifth year of his age.

To form a proper idea of the gigantic work accomplished by St. Vincent, we must acquaint ourselves with the religious condition of France at the time he commenced its regeneration. The general demoralization then prevailing can be correctly traced to the celebrated Pragmatic Sanction adopted by Charles the Seventh in 1438. This disastrous code of laws by which the Papal power was virtually extinguished in France, although nominally abrogated in 1461 by Lewis the Eleventh, continued in force till the time of Leo X, when it was annulled by Francis I. In its stead was substituted the Concordat by which the Emperor obtained the right of nominating subjects for the vacant bishoprics of the country. That indeed was a sad day for France when the State was empowered to select those who were to be the spiritual guides of the people and the lights of the Church. It seemed to be a revival of those old customs of Germany for the suppression of which Gregory VII had to hurl the thunders of excommunication against Henry IV. The practical working of the new system was not any worse than we might expect. Men were raised to the Episcopacy, not for their ecclesiastical qualifications, not for their piety or zeal for God's glory, but for reasons of State, for political purposes, for worldly and ambitious motives, without any regard sometimes for the moral or social character of the aspirant. An illustration of this state of affairs is furnished by the scandalous history of Henry IV's natural son, the Marquis of Verneuil.

Although not in holy orders, he not only possessed the incomes of several large ecclesiastical benefices, but was even Bishop of Metz, a position which he disgraced by his luxurious and immoral life and subsequent marriage. A similar character was the gifted but notorious Cardinal de Retz. The candor with which he speaks in the memoirs which he has left us of the irregularities of his life, and the motives of his actions, shows him to have been anything but a true ecclesiastic, and as utterly unfit for the mitre as his unworthy uncle, whose coadjutor he became.

If such was the character of the chief pastors, what must have been the status of the inferior clergy? Regardless of the progress of religion or the welfare or reputation of the church, these infamous bishops raised to the holy priesthood men like themselves remarkable for the absence of every Christian virtue, whose only object in life seemed to be the acquisition of wealth and the enjoyment of pleasure. Raised thus to the priesthood without any vocation from God, without any ecclesiastical training, without even the embellishments of an ordinary education, these men despised the clerical dress and were externally indistinguishable from the people over whom they presided. This degradation of the secular clergy was not, unhappily, to be ameliorated by the example of the regulars whom the system of patronage had completely demoralized. The vast revenues of their monasteries had so excited the cupidity of the nobles, that they thrust into these lucrative benifices their illegitimate children, their favorites, no matter how depraved, and sometimes even Protestants, so that men, living in monasteries governed by such superiors, might well be expected to lead most indifferent lives.

When, therefore, we consider the low state of morality among both the clergy and the bishops, we are not astonished at the want of religion, so conspicuous among the people. Christian morality and Christian principles had both alike died out. No respect was paid to laws, and might was the right of the strongest. The rich oppressed the poor, and the poor hated the rich.

Amidst this disturbed state of society and the spiritual desolation everywhere apparent, the great physician appears. St. Vincent comes to commence a reformation that is to embrace the bishops, the clergy and the people.

In all the great works accomplished by St. Vincent, we cannot fail to notice that the same Divine Spirit who suggested to him the idea, supplied him with the means of carrying it out. This is especially remarkable in what he did for the reformation of the Episcopate.

Cardinal Richelieu was then ruling France as the Prime Minister of Louis XIII.

Keen and penetrating, watching everything that was going on and always ready for an emergency, Richelieu was a consummate statesman. Though a Bishop of the Church, in his thoughts and aspirations he ever gave the first place to the temporal welfare of his kingdom. Yet he was always willing to do the Church a service when affairs of State did not stand in the way. Knowing full well that many of the evils, which afflicted his country, were to be ascribed to the bad men appointed to the Episcopal office, he determined to make a change in the character of those who were to be elevated to that high position, and with implicit confidence in the judgment of the saintly priest, he demanded from Vincent the names of those whom he considered fit to wear the mitre. These the Minister

carefully noted down for future action. Richelieu died in 1642, and when his royal master passed away a few months later, Anne of Austria, the mother of Louis XIV, succeeded to power as Regent. She took for her Prime Minister the bland, diplomatic, double-faced Cardinal Mazarin.

The influence which Vincent commenced to exercise with such good effect under Richelieu, in the appointment of worthy Bishops, became yet greater under the new government. Appointed by the Regent as one of the "Council of Conscience," it became his duty to examine the characters of those nominated to the Episcopate, and no one could become a Bishop without his approval and consent. With such a power, swayed by such a man, we are not surprised to see an era of hope begin to dawn on the Kingdom of France.

The reformation of the Episcopate necessarily tended to eradicate in a great measure the evils prevailing among the inferior clergy. To accomplish this work the more thoroughly, by not only purifying them from the shameful stains that disgraced the practice of their profession, but by filling them with an exalted idea of their dignity and their sacred office, and also imparting to them an education becoming their state of life, the foundation of seminaries became a matter of the most evident and gravest importance. Efforts, indeed, had already been made after the council of Trent to establish these ecclesiastical schools, but with no lasting effect. St. Vincent was not to be disheartened by the failure of the past, but both by his personal efforts and the encouragement he gave to his cherished friend, Jean Jacque Olier, he laid the foundation of those institutions so well, that ever since they have been permanent fixtures in the Church of France.

As in the seminary, only a general preparation for the priesthood was made, St. Vincent knowing the importance of the young Levites receiving their orders with the greatest piety and devotion, originated the salutary custom of making an eight or ten days' retreat before ordination. In those retreats the young ecclesiastic passed his time in silence, recollection and prayer, in the examination of his conscience and its purification by a general confession. His mind was directed towards the contemplation of the eternal truths, and he was especially impressed with the importance of the great step he was about to take. These holy exercises, which constituted so charming a finish to the secluded, thoughtful, pious, studious life of the seminary, exerted so powerful an influence on the lives of those advanced to orders that they are now required by the universal church as a necessary preliminary to ordination.

The same charity, which animated him in looking after the training and piety of those who were to be ordained to the priesthood, urged him to devise means of cherishing the fervor and zeal of those who were already on the field engaged in the works of the apostolate. For this purpose he established the weekly meetings of clergymen, commonly called the Tuesday Conferences, in which pious priests met to discuss ecclesiastical matters and to encourage each other, by word and example, in their sacerdotal duties. The good resulting from these conferences soon justified the wisdom which founded them and occasioned their speedy adoption in other places.

The interest which Vincent thus manifested in the care of the shepherds, though remarkably great, seems to dwindle into insignificance contrasted with his zeal

for the temporal and spiritual needs of the sheep of the flock. His activity knowing neither rest nor bounds was well explained by the words of Paul, "*Charitas Christi urget nos.* The charity of Christ urges us." Among the numerous evidences of the burning charity with which his heart was ever aglow, we may briefly mention his paternal treatment of the many spiritual lepers, whom he received into his house of St. Lazarus, to be there cured of their disorders; his devotion to the poor, afflicted idiots that he took under his care; his active compassion for the galley slaves of Marseilles, whose external miseries were surpassed only by the degradation and horrors of their inner life; the moral transformation of the Hotel Dieu, the great Parisian hospital, which yearly ministered to twenty-five thousand patients; the institution of the foundling asylum, where so many little ones found a happy refuge after being abandoned by their wicked and unnatural parents; and his efforts to reclaim the proud St. Cyran from the errors of Jansenism, and to extirpate from the soil of France the seeds of that wicked heresy. To these holy works of Vincent, of which necessity now allows only the mention, are to be added the Congregation of the Missions, and the order of the Sisters of Charity. These two institutes, by which he seemed to multiply himself for the good of others, deserve a somewhat extended notice. The Congregation of the Missions is a body of clergy who propose to themselves a threefold end, viz.: their own sanctification, the giving of missions, and the education of young men for the priesthood. The very common saying that great oaks from little acorns grow, displays its full significance, when we consider the humble origin and vigorous development of this congregation. The

great success and many happy results of a sermon preached by our Saint in the little town of Folleville, on the twenty-fifth of January, 1617, so charmed the pious Countess of Joigni, that she conceived the very laudable desire of having missions given every five years on her extensive estates. Failing, after repeated efforts, in securing the means to carry out her holy purposes, she was at last fortunate in obtaining from the proper authorities the College des Bons Enfans in Paris as a home for pious priests who would devote themselves to the work of evangelizing the country towns. St. Vincent, to whose charge the college was committed, commenced his work with one solitary assistant, but soon after was reinforced by a second clergyman. It was a most edifying sight to see this little band of devoted men going forth on their apostolic work. When setting out from home, as they had no servant to leave behind in charge, after locking the door, they would leave the key with a neighbor until their return. "Thus, they went forth," says Bedford, "carrying the few things they needed for their rustic altar and for their own support, and passed from village to village, catechising, preaching, hearing confessions and fulfilling the various functions of the mission in simplicity, humility and charity. They asked for nothing in return, and even refused what was offered, being mindful of the pious intention of their founders, that they should literally fulfill the divine counsel, "Freely you have received, freely give." The blessing of God was evidently with them and their work, as was testified by the abundant fruit of conversions and holiness produced by the mission. Their congregation rapidly increasing in numbers, not only was favored with a charter from the king, but was also

honored by the approbation of the Holy See. Its good fortune was, moreover, increased by being able to leave the poor, dilapidated College des Bons Enfans and establish its headquarters in the grand and magnificent Priory of St. Lazarus. It was from this house that its members afterwards became known as Lazarists. These good men gave during the lifetime of St. Vincent nearly seven hundred missions, in several of which he himself took a conspicuous part. But the missionary zeal of our Saint was not to be confined to his own country. He sent his Fathers to labor among the scattered shepherds of the Roman Compagna, among the Christian slaves of Barbary, among the untutored savages of Madagascar and among the persecuted Catholics of the Island of Saints. After having thus founded and consolidated his congregation, Vincent died, but the congregation did not die with him. It still lives and flourishes, and by its earnest, active work for the salvation of souls in every part of the earth is an eloquent witness to the spirit of its saintly founder.

Turning our attention now to that celebrated community, the Sisters of Charity, we find it, like the Congregation of the Missions, coming into existence in a very humble and unpretentious manner. It was founded by St. Vincent, with the aid of Madam Le Gras, a widow lady of wealth, of high social standing as well as of great piety, whom he made its first superioress. Her community, in the beginning, consisted only of four poor, simple country girls that Vincent selected for that purpose, but, like the grain of mustard seed, its growth was most rapid and extensive, so that even in the lifetime of St. Vincent it numbered no less than twenty-eight houses in Paris alone. Their mode of life cannot be understood better from any source than

from the words of their saintly founder. "Their convent," says he, "must be the houses of the sick, their cell the chambers of suffering, their chapel the parish church, their cloister the streets of the city or the wards of hospitals. In place of the rule which binds nuns to one enclosure, there must be the general vow of obedience; the grate through which they speak to others must be the fear of God; the veil which shuts out the world must be holy modesty."

The Sisters of Charity devoted their attention, first, only to the care of the sick poor in their homes, but as time progressed they gave themselves up to nearly every good work that their charitable endeavors could reach. Over twenty thousand of these good ladies are to-day engaged in works of benevolence, and by their self-sacrifices, their devotion to their work, their disdain of human motives, their deep-felt sympathy with the afflicted of every kind, and their charming amiability not only win the love and esteem of their own co-religionists, but excite also the well-deserved admiration of observers of every sect, and very often draw from them the most forcible declarations of the highest praise.

Such, though brief and imperfect, is the story of the life and labors of the great St. Vincent, the humble peasant's son of Dax, the holy priest of St. Lazarus, the preserver of the foundling, the father of the orphan, the protector of female youth, the instructor of the ignorant peasant, the benefactor of the aged poor, the servant of the galley slave, the consoler of Christian captives and the apostle of the afflicted.

May the odor of his virtues stimulate us to a holy life, and may the example of his charity urge us to always do our best to alleviate the sorrows and sufferings of the poor.

The Uncanonized Saints of Ireland.

Before entering upon the subject proper of my remarks, a brief explanation of the word canonization may not be out of place. Canonization is the supreme authoritative judgment of the Church that the person canonized has practised all the natural and supernatural virtues in a most heroic degree, and has been admitted without doubt to the enjoyment ot the Beatific vision. This judgment is founded not only on the testimony of men, but also of God himself, who, by miracles worked before and after the death of his servant bears undoubted witness to the sanctity of the deceased. The honors of canonization are now conferred only by the Holy See. Among all human tribunals there is none whose investigations are so thorough and so searching as that which has charge of the canonization of Saints. To have it declare a miracle authentic requires almost a miracle itself. Its work, too, entails most enormous expenses and hence a member of the Borromean family is related to have said at the canonization of St. Charles that he hoped there never would be another Saint in the family.

The word "Saint" is generally used to designate such as have been formally canonized. It is also applied, and with great propriety too, to those who, though their piety was never endorsed by the Church, yet led most holy lives, died saintly deaths and reached the goal of eternal happiness. It is to such Saints as these that we refer in our present discourse.

To aid us in forming some idea of the marvelous number of Irish Saints and Martyrs, we shall consider

four distinct periods in the history of Catholic Ireland, viz.: the three hundred years immediately succeeding the conversion of the nation, the three hundred years of Danish invasions, the seven hundred years of English domination and the period of the famine in 1846.

The beginning of St. Patrick's apostolate found about five millions of inhabitants in the island. These were not by any means a barbarous people. They possessed considerable culture, had a fair knowledge of the art of war, were ruled by a system of jurisprudence, had a national music and a stable government. They were both reverential and open to conviction, and hence they no sooner perceived the reasonableness of the Christian faith than they immediately embraced it. The kindling of the paschal fire on the hill of Slane and the illumination of the whole island by the light of the gospel seemed almost contemporaneous. In some other nations the embracing of the Christian faith was like the awaking of a strong healthy child from a profound refreshing sleep. It first feels an almost indistinct consciousness of the light, and after turning in its bed, with the faintest effort opens its little eyes only to close them again. It rests quietly for a few moments longer, it turns itself again, stretches its little limbs, opens its eyes completely and at last fully discerns the golden sunbeams coming through the window. Such however was not the case with Ireland. Its submission to the gospel was both immediate and unanimous. The result of his preaching must have been a surprise to St. Patrick himself. An assumed parallel case may perhaps give us some idea of the wonders his words had effected. A pagan philosopher from Central Asia arrives in Boston where he commences to preach his peculiar doctrine. This is accepted so rapidly and so

earnestly by everyone who hears him, that in a few years the whole State of Massachusetts becomes as pagan as the philosopher himself. Christianity is entirely eradicated, the churches are all turned into idolatrous temples, every Christian symbol has been destroyed, and everyone is practising the new teaching as if the name of Christ had never been known in the land. Such a speedy and complete change from one religion to another seems almost incredible, yet such was the change brought about in Ireland by the teaching of her Apostle. It was a most astounding transformation, and it was visible both in the inner and outer life of the people. In the freshness of the early morning we see the solemn procession slowly wending its way over the dewy, green fields to the House of God. Borne high above the head, the crucifix leads the ranks. It is followed by the sweet faced Acolytes, little boys in their snow white surplices swinging their silver censors from which clouds of fragrant incense ascend to heaven like the prayers of the Saints. Next come the cowled and cinctured monks with their eyes cast down as they chant the psalms of the prophet King. These are followed by the Bishop in his cope and mitre, in one hand holding his crozier and with the other blessing his faithful people as he passes on. The church is reached, the tapers are lighted, and the Holy Mass commences.

Again, the shades of night begin to gather o'er the scene and the vesper bell is ringing. From every monastery and from every private house the evening prayer goes up to God. On their bended knees they ask forgiveness for the day's transgressions, they repeat the acts of faith, hope and charity, they beseech the Blessed Virgin Mary to be at all times a mother to them, and ever keep

them under her loving care, and finally they breathe forth an earnest *De Profundis* for the dear ones departed, that they may rest in peace.

These devout exercises were as regular as the rising and the setting of the sun.

To one acquainted with the fervent sentiments of piety which the preaching of St. Patrick produced, the rise and wondrous growth of monasticism throughout the island will not appear strange. Every family had a daughter following the example and the rule of St. Brigid or a son either serving God at the altar, or doing penance within the inclosure of some rigid religious institute. Subjects of this high vocation were supplied by every grade and rank of society, by the families of the lower order, by the nobility of the land, by the sons and daughters of the chieftains and the reigning princes. Monastic establishments were everywhere, in every town, in every hamlet, in every city, on the banks of every river, by the shores of every placid lake. Ireland seemed to be one vast monastery.

But the people of that young Christian nation were not content with leading lives of asceticism and holiness themselves; they were also most earnest and self-sacrificing missionaries, and hence we find them in every part of the world spreading the truths of the Gospel by word and by example. St. Columbanus and St. Fiacre in France, St. Gall in Switzerland, St. Kilian in Franconia, St. Virgilius in Saltzburg, and St. Fridolus in Thuringia, are but a few specimens of the heroic Apostles that Erin sent forth to convert the nations. "From the most southern points of Europe," says McHale of Tuam, "to the walls of Adrian, and from the shores of the Atlantic to the banks of the Vistula, there is not one solitary district over which the massive frag-

ments of Irish genius and Irish sanctity are not profusely scattered."

Now, when we ponder over the spirit of holiness which pervaded the domestic, the monastic and missionary life of five millions of people through all the generations of 300 years, will not our brain almost reel in trying to compute the multitude of Saints that were produced and nourished during that lengthy period? As the great procession winds its way over that luminous, silvery, aerial road from the shores of Erin, across the Atlantic to the portals of bliss among the golden clouds of the dazzling sunset, we are lost in amazement, not only at its numbers, but at its beauty and variety. Kings with their brows bound around with sparkling coronets, princes and chieftains of the clans, valorous knights dressed in coats of mail, venerable bearded bards bearing their tuneful harps, holy bishops with the light of God's love beaming from their foreheads, priests arrayed in their gorgeous vestments, white robed virgins from the cloister, sturdy, sinewy sons of toil fresh from the fields, matronly women surrounded by their pure and charming daughters, are some of the happy ones we see in that blissful throng.

But hark! The great clock of time is striking the age of the world. We count its strokes one by one. It is the beginning of the ninth century. The scene is shifting. A change is coming over the face of Erin. Peace and tranquility are about to abandon her shores. We stand on the hills of Antrim and look over the bleak waste of waters towards the North. What are those little black specks we see on the horizon? They are growing larger. They are coming nearer. They are ships. Some are driven by sails, some propelled by banks of oars. The flag of Denmark floats from their

mast tops. They are the Danes bearing down for the first time on the defenseless coast of Erin. Never was there a braver or more fearless race of men than those Northern pirates of the ninth century. Worshippers of Odin and other pagan deities, they hated and despised Christianity. They delighted in fighting and bloodshed. They knew not fear. They cared not for the refinements of life; even in their food it was quantity not quality they looked for. They were of the same stock as Alaric, Attila and Genseric, the men who centuries before had swooped down on the Roman Empire, overthrew its gorgeous civilization, plundered and destroyed its magnificent cities. Like their ancestors they craved for plunder, but to get it they would not, like them, traverse whole continents, climb almost impassable mountains, and ford wide, deep, swift running rivers. Having grown accustomed to the boisterous excitement of a seafaring life they preferred to seek their fortune in deeds of piracy. To such rapacious and daring freebooters the shores of Ireland offered rich and tempting prizes. They accordingly attacked the Cathedrals and rifled them of their jeweled vessels, their gold and silver ornaments. They desecrated and robbed the shrines of the Saints, they despoiled the monasteries of everything precious, made bonfires of their priceless manuscripts, destroyed the buildings and killed or scattered the inmates.

After thus harrassing and tormenting Ireland for two hundred years with these incessant depredations and murders, they at last made up their minds to conquer and appropriate the land whose wealth and fertility they had learned to value. With this object in view, all Scandanavia was ordered to get ready for the conquest. The chieftains gathered together to hold coun-

cils of war on the shores of the Baltic. The shipyards were alive with the unceasing din and excitement of artizans preparing their strongest and most efficient crafts of war. The ablest and most trusty warriors were selected, encased in the strongest coats of mail and armed with the most formidable and most deadly weapons. No pains, no expenses were spared to place the success of the undertaking beyond the possibility of doubt. When all was ready the word was given and the fleet set sail.

In the meantime a great monarch was ruling the destinies of Ireland. His name was Brian Boru. Brian scented war from afar and sounded the bugle of alarm. Having gathered around his standard an army twenty thousand strong, the provincial troops of Munster and Connaught, and the men of Meath, he marched towards Dublin and met the enemy in the plains of Clontarf. Never before did two such valiant armies face one another in the field. Each was composed of heroes strong and stout of limb, whose courage and determination no thought of death could weaken. There was not a cowardly heart on either side. It was the morning of Good Friday, April 23, 1014. The aged monarch, seated on his magnificent, richly caparisoned horse, was early in the field and riding along the lines, his long white hair floating in the wind. With his sword in one hand and his crucifix in the other he aroused the enthusiasm of his men to the highest pitch. "Remember," said he, "that you are now about to engage with a foe that not only has been insulting your faith and persecuting your race for the last two hundred years, but is determined now to annihilate both your religion and your liberties. Your duty to-day is to avenge the past and secure to yourselves the privileges of Christians and

freemen. Courage, then, and victory will be yours. The God of battles is on your side, for your cause is the cause of God and of justice.

The words of the brave old Christian king had the desired effect. Up went the sun-burst, the standard of Fingal, and amidst the shouting of the men, the blaer of the trumpets and the clangor of the swords striking on the shields, the battle commenced. It was a battle of giants. Prodigies of valor were witnessed on either side, and many times it was doubtful how the conflict would end. For a long time victory seemed to waver between the contending parties, Brian Boru was at the request of his officers in his tent at the rear, and on his bended knees was praying most fervently for the favorable issue of the battle. Blood was flowing as water, and succeeding hours seemed but to intensify the ferocity of the struggle. At last, however, the Danes commenced to weaken and to succumb to the superior prowess and the battle axes of the Irish. They broke, turned and fled in disorder, and a great victory was gained by the glorious sons of St. Patrick. Fourteen thousand Danes and seven thousand Irish lost their lives on that memorable Good Friday at Clontarf the Marathon of Ireland.

The Danes never again tried to subjugate Ireland, but during the subsequent hundred years gave themselves to an occasional indulgence in their old style of predatory warfare. Of the number of those who gave up their lives in testimony of the true faith during the three hundred years of incessant, bloody depredations committed by these ruthless pirates, we have no record at all. The Angel of God alone who registered their names on the book of life can tell the thousands who received the martyr's crown in that eventful period of Ireland's history.

But just as the Danes are disappearing from our view we find the country invaded and polluted by another class of intruders. They are under the guidance of a leader with a crown on his head, with treachery and deceit in his heart, and with a scroll of parchment in his hand. That man is Henry the Second of England, the murderer of St. Thomas a Becket, and the parchment in his hand is the pretended bull of the Pope. With the authenticity of that document we are not now concerned. He came, forsooth, to convert the Irish. The foothold he thus got on the country gave him and his Normans an advantage which they never afterwards surrendered. From the time of Henry the Second we pass on to the time of Henry the Eighth. Now, all know but too well the loathsome character of that infamous wretch. He was a vile, lecherous, bloated despot. It was well said of him that he never spared a man in his wrath, nor a woman in his lust. As he sat on the English throne he was the very personification of anti-Christ. In his ambition to establish his supremacy in spiritual matters and his right to every species of church property he commenced a persecution against the Irish that Nero himself could not have exceeded in cruelty. One or two instances will show how well his emissaries carried out the royal will. Father Robert, the prior of a monastery, having been three times commanded to recognize the new order of things, three times refused to do so. "I and my community," said he, "are resolved that no violence shall move us from the principles of truth. We recognize no head of the Catholic Church, save the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and as for the King of England, we regard him not even as a member of that holy Church, but as the head of the Synagogue of Satan." Hardly had he finished these words when

his head was struck from his body with a single blow. His monks were variously treated. Some were confined in private houses, the jails being all full; some were secretly murdered and some publicly hanged in the market place. The murder of the Prior of the Trinitarian Convent at Limerick was similar to that of Father Robert. When told to choose between life and the new religion, the venerable man fell on his knees and exclaimed, "O, Lord, this morning I offered to Thee on the altar the unbloody sacrifice of the body of my Savior; grant that I may now offer to Thy greater honor and glory tbe sacrifice of my own life." He was put to death immediately.

But the persecution of Henry was mild and tame compared with that of his daughter Elizabeth, who was swayed by a most diabolical opposition to that religion which she had sworn at her coronation to uphold and defend. Elizabeth was, indeed, a most remarkable woman, although she possessed none of the characteristic traits of womanhood. Her natural talents, her diplomacy and her statesmanship rank her among England's ablest sovereigns. But unscrupulous in the highest degree she had the blood-thirsty, ferocious nature of a tigress. Next to that of ruling the English, the desire nearest her heart was that of exterminating the Irish, for the murder of those who professed the Catholic faith was the only way she saw of ridding Ireland of the detested religion. The awful butcheries of the Irish showed how well her wishes were carried out by the minions of her power. "The English Nation," says Froude, "was shuddering over the atrocities of the Duke of Alva, yet Alva's bloody sword never touched the young, the defenseless or those whom even the most degraded savages respect." "In justice to

the English soldier," the same author asserts, "it must be said that it was no fault of theirs if any Irish child of that generation was allowed to live to manhood."

Among the many savage persecutors of the Irish who succeeded the "Good Queen Bess" the most brutal and most merciless was the canting and hypocritical Cromwell. When his own countrymen dug up his dirty corpse from its grave, loaded it with chains, hung it on a gallows, and then buried it at the foot of the gibbet, they gave expression to the feeling which all humanity must ever entertain for that incarnate demon. His nine months' visit to Ireland can never be obliterated from the memories of its people. Marching at the head of several regiments of soldiers, each of whom carried a bible in one hand, and a sword in the other, he determined to annihilate the nation, and the cold-blooded massacres of Drogheda and Wexford witness to the reality and force of his resolution. It is estimated by some that as many as one million Irishmen met their death at the point of Cromwell's wrathful sword.

In the long protracted period of England's cruel and pitiless control in Ireland, you yourselves may imagine how vast must have been the number of those who cheerfully suffered death, because they would not surrender the sacred inheritance of their faith for a mess of potage, and because they preferred to obey the commands of God rather than those of men. Their name is legion, and though unknown to fame, they shine with as much glory around the throne of God as any of those Saints whose deeds are extolled in history.

We now come to the year 1846. That was a year that even some of you here present may have good reasons to remember. It was the time when the angel of death unfolded his sable wings over the four fair

provinces of Ireland. The gaunt and fleshless skeleton of starvation was then everywhere to be seen slowly moving about in silent, helpless misery. Appalling sights met the eye whatever way one turned. On every face was care, on every brow was gloom, in every heart was desolation. The bloom on the cheek of beauty was faded, the brightness of the eye of youth was dimmed, the merry laugh of gayety banished. The famine raged in the country and the towns; it slew its victims in the garrets, in the cellars, in the back yards and in the public streets. Death reveled in a most repulsive carnival. Pass along the public highways and you would meet the corpses of what were once strong, able men, their bloodless lips swollen and discolored from eating the berries that grew on the hedges. Go into the cabins and you will be surprised to see what wretchedness four small walls can contain; one or two children, perhaps, dead on the floor; the mother on a bed of straw writhing in the agonies of fever and starvation with a crying, famished child lying on her bosom; the father weak and emaciated, sitting near an almost extinguished fire in a frenzy of despair, less at his own internal sufferings than by reason of the desolation of his humble household. The inability to bury the dead was one of the crowning horrors of the famine. Sometimes the dead and the dying lay for hours and hours side by side in the same bed; sometimes a body remained day after day on the middle of the floor where it had first fallen; sometimes the dead were removed just outside the door and left there because the bearers were too sick or feeble to do any more for their departed friends. "In the year 1846," says Mitchel, "no less than 300,000 perished either of mere hunger or of typhus fever caused by hunger.'

During this awful visitation assistance was sent to starving people by the Czar of Russia, by the Khedive of Egypt, by the Shah of Persia, and the Sultan of Turkey. Outside assistance, however, was really not needed for there was plenty of food in the country, but it was kept locked up in the granaries by the English laws or exported to other countries by English ships. With truth then did the juries empaneled to pass on the deaths of the famine victims frequently bring in a verdict of wilful murder against the British government.

There is no doubt at all but that the ranks of the Blessed in Heaven were heavily recruited from the multitudes who perished of hunger in that year '46. Some died spurning the tempter who came to offer them bread as the price of their apostacy ; many died alone, with no one but God to comfort them, and when they breathed their last, angels came and carried their precious souls to the land that ever flows with milk and honey. That cloud which then hung over Ireland, though dark and terrific, had a lining not indeed of silver, but of gold, the lining of divine faith, and it was studded all over with the flashing jewels of holy souls who now are the brilliant ornaments of God's eternal home.

When the grand panorama of Ireland's Christian history from St. Patrick down to the present time passes before our eyes, do we not feel our souls fired with enthusiastic love for the land of our Fathers ? Its history is the history of heroes. It is no wonder we feel proud of our matchless ancestors, of our saintly lineage and of the blood that courses through our veins. We are certainly a favored race, a chosen people. Let us never forget our glorious past. Let it be the guiding star of our life. Let us try to be the worthy sons of our

sainted fathers, by loving our holy faith above all the things of earth, and by living up to its holy teaching, even in its most minor details, and thus we may hope to be finally made partakers in that bliss that is now enjoyed by the canonized and uncanonized saints of Ireland.

The Funeral of a Priest.

God has again spoken to us in language more distinct and plainer than ever issued from the shrouded summit of Mount Sinai. He has repeated the lesson which he has so often taught us before, "Remember man that thou art dust and unto dust thou wilt return." In the present instance a most forcible emphasis gives natural weight to the warning. It is not an ordinary mortal that has been stricken down. The angel of death has invaded the sanctuary, the effulgent glory of the regal priesthood has been dimmed, the light on the candlestick has been extinguished, the anointed of the Lord has been ruthlessly violated, and to-day we stand silently and mournfully about that well-known but lifeless form, clad indeed in his sacrificial robes but never more to be seen ministering at God's altar.

It is no wonder that you and I are filled with grief at his departure from among us, for he was our friend and our brother. We were always delighted to meet him, we welcomed his friendly visits to our homes, and we were charmed with his pleasant and instructive conversation. But alas! we shall meet him no more. He has left this terrestrial abode; he has finished his days of probation; he has been called home from this land of exile and is now we trust, in his Father's house.

Whither he has gone, we all of us must expect soon to follow. Hodie mihi, cras tibi. It is only a matter of a few days when the pall-bearers will call for the most long-lived among us and carry him forth to his silent

grave. When Pharaoh asked Jacob his age, the venerable patriarch with great dignity and solemnity replied, "The days of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years, few and evil." Time in the estimation of this holy man was very short, and so it is. Like the sands in the hour glass, life is flowing fast away. It is but too well portrayed by those similitudes of holy writ. In one place it is likened to the blade of grass which bends with every storm, is now trodden under foot by the traveler, now cut down in a moment by the husbandman, now assailed at the root by a secret worm, now withered by vapors too subtle to discern. In another place it is compared to the flower, the frailest and most perishable production of nature. It opens its bosom to the morning light, and delights us with its fragrance and beauty, but in the evening it droops its head, its bright hues are faded, its leaves are fallen to the earth and scattered through the air, the scorching or chilling wind has passed over it, and it is gone and "the place that knew it once will now know it no more forever." How true these figures of speech are, we are now most strongly reminded by the death of this good priest.

His death was a fitting termination to his exemplary life, and we are consoled in our affliction by the circumstances that attended the last hours of his sacerdotal career. At the coming of the bridegroom he was found ready like the wise virgins in the gospel, with his lamp well trimmed and burning brightly in his hand. He was fortified against his last agony, not only by the sacraments of the Church, but also by the discipline and influence of a good and well-ordered life.

Now, this solemn presence in which we stand suggests and unfolds two duties to our mind. The first is

the duty of getting our own house in order and of beginning to make preparations for our own death, which may come at any time, and much sooner, perhaps, than we expect. Death is ever hanging around us, and dogging our every step. Who that places his hand on his beating heart, does not feel the slightness of the bulwark defending the fountain of life? Who that knows the human frame, is not aware of the narrow partition existing between us and the grave? A small artery, that tender, slender texture which throbs beneath our touch, holds in trust the life of man. A rupture in this frail vessel is enough for our destruction. A few drops of blood diverted from their ordinary channel quenches at once the vital spark, and so the very nutriment of our frame becomes the cause of its desolation. In addition to the dangers from within, every object that surrounds us contains a motive for alarm. The very elements themselves are sometimes converted into the most effective weapons of destruction. The air we breathe now charged with poisonous vapors, now precipitated in terrific storms, often destroys the life it had sustained. In the ocean many find an unlooked-for grave. The flame that warms and cheers us, often passes its limit, and involves the dwelling and its tenants in the ruin of its fiery folds. Death rushes with the rapidity of thought on electric wings from the clouds above us. We are never safe. The sword hangs by a single hair over our unprotected heads. Whilst we seem secure, some secret obstruction may be developing its fatal presence in the very seat of life, or the thin partition separating life and death may be wearing away. The head now crowded with so many schemes may be smitten with apoplexy, and the heart which now beats with such high hopes may be con-

tracted by some sudden and destructive spasm. In the light, then, of these considerations, the duty of preparing ourselves for death must commend its immediate and thorough performance to every considerate man who has any regard for his future welfare. The second duty which this occasion forces on our consideration is that of praying for our departed friend. There is no rose without a thorn; the brightest gold is seldom found without an alloy, and even good men and good priests are not always without their imperfections and sinfulness before the Eternal and infinitely just God. There are heights of goodness and spiritual perfection to which their sublime vocation calls the clergy to which they sometimes have not the courage nor the spirit of self-sacrifice to ascend, and for this they must answer to Almighty God. "The man of God," says the Apostle, "should be perfect, furnished for every good work," and in the language of Isaiah (33.15) he "should walk in justice and speak truth; should shake his hands from all bribes and shut his eyes that he may see no evil; he should dwell on high, the fortification of rocks should be his highness." How difficult it is to reach the height of such perfection, and hence in the fierce light which breaks against the sacerdotal character things appear grievous imperfections which in other men would scarcely seem moral defects.

On such failings we should be slow to pass harsh judgments, for we humbly hope that they may be regarded with divine pity and merciful forgiveness by Him who alone fully understands all the springs of human action; who knows the clay of which we are made, and who can compassionate our infirmities, having been tempted in all things, like as we are, without sin. Jesus and His Holy Mother were the

only sinless souls that blessed this world by their presence. All the rest of mankind have been stained by sins of origin or action. Hence, the combined knowledge of the frailty of man and the awful sanctity of God joined with the teachings of holy writers, lead us to the conclusion, that it is a very difficult thing to reach Heaven without first passing through the purifying flames of purgatory. The probability, then, that our friend may be suffering should urge us most strongly to come to his assistance with our prayers. Let us imitate the charity of Holy Church. In her requiems and offices for the dead she expresses the tearful prayers of her children, their great sorrow and abiding hope, and whilst she offers up the dread sacrifice for her departed servant, in accents most piteous and most moving, she beseeches the Almighty Father to grant him the seat of refreshment, the happiness of rest and the brightness of life "Refrigerii sedem, quietis beatitudinem et luminis claritatem." Let us, then, pray for our departed friend. Let us ask our Blessed Mother to intercede for him, and to recommend him most earnestly to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, that God may have mercy upon him and forgive him his sins. "Requiem æternam dona ei Domine et lux perpetua luceat ei." Eternal rest give unto him, O God, and let perpetual light shine upon him. Amen.

The Public Schools.

"It is," said Dr. Lingard, "an extraordinary phenomenon in the history of the human mind that Catholics are not allowed to understand their own belief. Of the myriads of declaimers against popery, from the unlettered female who reads theological lectures to her pupils in the nursery, to the Right Reverend Bishop in his instructions to the clergy of his diocese, there is not one who does not appear to claim a more accurate knowledge of the Catholic doctrine than ourselves, and their decisions are more infallible than those of the Roman Pontiff himself."

Though spoken in years past and gone, these words of Lingard's are yet very applicable to our own times. Where the Catholic Church is concerned, measures of malignity pass for common justice and lies are as unhesitatingly received, as if they were unmistakably impressed with the coinage of truth. She is condemned without a hearing, and for doctrines too, which owe their parentage to the filthy spawning of shameless malice, and which are then slanderously imputed to her as her cherished offspring. This is surely anything but fair play. Genuine untutored honesty, springing from the Godlike dignity of real manhood, points to another course. It teaches us that every one has rights which are to be respected, the right to the good name he bears as well as to the property he owns. No one should be villified and drummed out of society with the mark of infamy branded on his brow, unless his crime be as manifest as the noonday sun and incapable of being disproved by any human process. This is the way we

wish to be treated ourselves. This is the way we want others to be treated, and this is the way the Catholic Church should be treated. Instead, therefore, of lynching her to the first lamp post we see, or of even subjecting her to the informalities and hasty conclusions of a court martial, give her what is allowed every morning in our police courts to the lowest specimen of human degradation, the full benefit of a square, impartial trial. State all charges brought against her, produce the witnesses, point out the place, name the day and the hour. Give her then an opportunity to reply, to make her defence, to state her doctrines in her own words and to lay down the motives for her conduct. Let her be listened to with attention. Let her words have the consideration they merit, and then, if unbiased reason condemns her, let her be condemned and cast forth, and let her place be no longer found among the haunts of men. But if the case be otherwise; if a careful, unprejudiced examination brings nothing unworthy against her, let slander hold its venemous tongue and let her work in peace the good she has in view. The many accusations which she would thus repel, as having no foundation in fact, sometimes arise from a pardonable ignorance, sometimes from a wilful disregard for truth; but to whatever source their origin may be ascribed, they lack that authority which truth alone can give, and merit the contempt which is the just inheritance of every lie.

The subject of the present remarks has for a long time been a prolific source of controversy. Men seem to be very unwilling to acknowledge as correct the attitude of the church toward our common schools on the principle, perhaps, that nothing good can come out of Nazareth. They see in these schools nothing that is

defective, but everything that is admirable, and looking upon them as a panacea for every evil affecting society, consider all opposition to them as hindrances to the progress of learning, or as a blow struck at the very existence of our magnificent government. How any man with any knowledge of past history, or of the present times, could ascribe such motives to the church is perfectly inexplicable.

At her very entrance into the world, though her cradle was crimsoned with blood and her spirit perplexed with every species of persecution, she nevertheless, encouraged with her fostering smile the development of the mental faculties, and she therefore points with pride to such men as Tertullian, Origen and Clement of Alexandria, who were giants among their contemporaries, and astonished the world by the very vastness of their learning. Again we find her influencing the Jeromes, the Ambroses and Augustines of a later period, the masterspirits of their age; men whose unequaled minds and herculean energies of thought commend them even at this day to our admiration. Instead, then, of enchaining men's souls and keeping them in the darkness of intellectual bondage, the church has ever been striving to fan the sacred flame of learning and genius. It was always her joy to see her children strike out boldly and fearlessly into the unexplored realms of truth, and the more the floodgates of light yielded to their levers of thought, the greater was her maternal exultation. From the very beginning of her career down to the present day when she lays the corner stone of her university under the very shadow of the Capitol, her spirit has been the same, as is well attested by that long list of her sons around whose brows history has entwined the bay leaves of immortality; men

who have graced every grade of literature, who have added splendor to the arts and enriched the sciences with the wealth of their researches.

The grandest universities of Europe too, Cambridge, Oxford, Prague, Louvain, Vienna and Salamanca, bear unmistakable evidence of her appreciation of knowledge, and when we recollect that sixty-four of these universities had been founded before the Reformation, we feel justified in asserting that the love and cultivation of letters did not spring from the so-called emancipation of reason in the religious revolution of the sixteenth century. Not only did the church found and foster these higher seats of learning; she also claims the glory of having devised and established public free schools, as could conclusively be shown from abundant proofs going back to the sixth century. What the Protestant Traveler Laing says of the clergy of the present day can very well then be applied to those of the past. "It is," says he, "by their own advance and not by keeping back the advance of the people that the popish priesthood of the present day seek to keep ahead of the intellectual progress of the community in Catholic lands."

And just as opposition to secular schools cannot be construed into hostility to literary progress, so neither can it be regarded as fraught with enmity and harm to this our country and our highly valued liberties. There are self-seeking editors, narrow-minded, uncultured preachers, and clap-trap orators, who would make the world believe that this country belongs exclusively and forever to its Protestant citizens alone, and that Catholics are here only by tolerance and must be watched as enemies of the public good. We feel almost like craving forgiveness for even noticing these baseless and

lying assumptions. No party and no sect possess exclusive ownership of this land. We are all joint heirs to its advantages and its glories, and among all the citizens of this great Republic we Catholics feel that as none are more devoted than we to the Constitution and flag of our country, so none are more ready to lay down their lives in defence of the free institutions under which we live. The opposition, therefore, which the Church has to our system of secular education comes not from any hostility to learning, or from any lurking hatred of our own particular form of government.

We have no objection to the public schools as such. There are many good things in and connected with them which we greatly admire. We admire the spirit that founded them, we admire their princely buildings and their regal outfit, and we admire the zeal and success of many of their teachers. The public schools are good and very good as far as they go, but they are not good enough for us. We want everything that is good in and about them, and we are willing to pay our share for the same, but we want something more. The education they give is only a partial one; we want a complete education. We want them to train the heart as well as the mind. Educating the brain alone and neglecting the heart is putting the sword into the hands of a maniac, and may be worse than no education at all. In confirmation of this I might cite the words of ex-Governor Brown of Missouri, who says that our prime rascals are the educated ones.

The Iron Duke of Wellington, too, takes the stand to proclaim the terrible truth that "learning without religion only tends to make a man a cunning devil." In accord with these sentiments Herbert Spencer, in his lectures on sociology, classes among educated people

fraudulent bankrupts, originators of bubble companies, makers of adulterated goods, users of false trade marks and light weights, the great majority of gamblers and those who cheat insurance companies. And Froude emphatically endorses the opinion of Florence Nightingale that the natural effect of the communication of mere secular knowledge to youths is only to suggest the wish for illicit objects of desire.

Since such is the character of a godless education, is it surprising that we should be opposed to it? Is it surprising that we should be opposed to our present system of secular schools in which it is given? Is it surprising that we should be opposed to these schools when we hear Col. Green, of Hartford, in one of the conferences of the Evangelical Alliance, presided over by Justice Harlan of the Supreme Court, point out as one of the agencies of social vice the public school "where evil influences are as rife as fungi in the swamp." These plain, outspoken words of Col. Green are corroborated by the Rev. Lyman Edwin Davis, a Protestant clergyman. "In our prejudice," says he, "against dogma, we are encouraging doubt. In our determination that religious training shall not be exclusively of Paul, or of Apollo, or of Peter, we have excluded Christ himself. In our fear of Rome we are admitting Sodom and Gomorrah."

From what we have adduced it must be plain to every candid and fair minded man that the stand taken by Catholics in the matter of public primary education is both rational and praiseworthy, and that they do perfectly right in refusing to have their children educated at schools which their own consciences and the testimony of men capable of giving a sound opinion on the matter forbid them to approve.

Nevertheless, for the building and supporting of these schools they are taxed just the same as other people. This school tax for them is a crying injustice, a species of religious persecution, worse even than taxation without representation. It is an injustice that has lived long enough and should see its end soon. This question of unjust taxation has recently been ably discussed in the New York *Journal of Commerce*, which practically confirms and supports these ideas. I think I cannot do better than give you its very words. Here they are:

"The Catholic says with truth and evident sincerity that he believes religious training to be the chief part of education. The common school does not pretend to furnish such training, and he is compelled, therefore, to withdraw his children and to educate them in parochial institutions. If all taxation for educational purposes is abandoned he has nothing to say; but if schools are to be supported by public funds, then exempt him from taxation or give him the proportion of the money to educate his children in his own way. He offers to subject his schools to any test as to their efficiency and good conduct as a condition of the appropriation. He objects, very justly, to pay for the support of schools where no faith is taught, and from which he can derive no benefit, and then to be compelled to support wholly at his own expense, the schools to which he must send his children. If we are asked whether we favor the appropriation of the public money to support such sectarian schools we answer with a decided negative. But we do say that if a Romanist is taxed to support a school which is a stench to his nostrils, and the godless character of which is essential to the fairness of the system, he then

is justly entitled to a proportion of the fund thus raised for the school which by all that he holds sacred he is compelled to patronize. The common school outgrew its usefulness and its right to exist at the public expense at the moment it ceased to give the young committed to it a training in the fear of God. When the teachers could not carry on this, the very highest part of all proper education, the schools should have been left as the churches were, to the voluntary support of the people. This is the only logical and consistent answer to the Catholic demand for school money. Let them educate their children in their own schools at their own expense, and make no demand upon them to support any other school."

In reply to this recital of our wrongs we sometimes hear it said: Well, if Catholics do not like the public schools they need not use them. They can build schools for themselves, and pay for and support them, too. This is, to say the least, a very ungenerous and un-American way of meeting the difficulty, and is indicative of a very limited and narrow-minded spirit. It sounds too much like might is the right of the strongest.

Such, however, we are confident, are not the sentiments of the great majority of our citizens, who are too noble minded to impose intentionally upon any one, and too honest not to remedy a wrong once detected as such. With them the public schools are synonyms of perfection, and in their estimation are the boast and the glory of our present civilization. The State, we are told, must maintain and defend these schools as a matter of self preservation against the encroachments of ignorance, the great bane of our national existence. In this assertion two things are implied which we cannot admit. In the first place it is supposed that the

State has a right to teach, which is absolutely false. The State has no more right to teach than it has to preach the Gospel. To parents alone, or those deputed by them, belong the right and the duty of education and no human laws can deprive parents of that right or exempt them from that duty. This is the doctrine of Chancellor Kent, of Sir William Blackstone, of Puffendorf, and of Dr. Wayland in his "Elements of Moral Science."

In the second place it is taken for granted that a secular education, such as is given in our public schools, is the great bulwark and safeguard of the nation. This, too, is unmistakably erroneous and misleading. The safeguard of the nation is to be found in the observance of the laws of God and of man, and in the contentment of its people. How the godless education of the public schools helps to carry out these requirements, two eminent Protestant writers will tell us. Dr. Hill, President of the Bucknell University, says: "The State has given us a system of public schools of great value, but very imperfectly adapted to its own end of producing citizens. It tends to produce superficial and conceited men and women instead of self-supporting and substantial members of society." Richard Grant White is more explicit than Dr. Hill. He says: "The system of education in the public schools fails to train young people for the duties and business of life. It rather makes them bumptious and impertinent." Going into particulars he says that mistresses of households of long experience prefer employing a domestic who can hardly read and cannot write to enduring the bad manners of a girl from the public schools. These schoolgirls are "ignorant, slovenly, heedless, headstrong, self-conceited, disrespectful, and altogether unamenable to the

discipline of a well ordered house." As to the public school boy in the majority of cases he is "less respectfull, less docile, less in earnest about his work, and on the whole inferior in principle, in faithfulness, and even in manners, to the boy who has been taught merely to read and to write, to fear God, and to honor his father and mother."

To supplement the evidence of these two able scholars I will quote the testimony of a writer in the Philadelphia *Times*. "Our children," says he, "have their poor little brains crammed full of all kinds of impossible knowledge, of names and dates and numbers and unintelligible rules, till there is absolutely no room left to hold any of the simple truths of honor, of duty and morality, which former generations deemed more important than all the learning of the books. There is just one thing that is ever held before them—that one man is as good as another, if not a little better, and that every boy among them may expect to become President of the United States, and every girl the richest lady in the land. The result is that they leave school utterly ignorant of all that is most essential for them to know, and outside of the schools there is no provision for their learning anything." The Chicago *Interior* tells us what we may probably expect from this sort of thing. "To-day," it goes on to say, "the character of the education in our public schools is the source of immeasurable and alarming peril to our country. A godless nation or people is always on the broad highway to anarchy and is not far from its destined goal. With the sad and warning experience of other nations before us we allow our public schools to educate our children in a practical atheism, regardless of the consequences which are sure to follow when the intellect is educated

at the expense of the moral sense and in a way that is sure to lead to intellectual barbarism." According to these authorities learning by itself does not seem to have any capability to form good and useful citizens and consequently cannot be regarded as the safeguard of the nation.

Many thoughtful and well meaning men fearing the consequences of the godless education given in the public schools, suggest the substitution in them of a sort of an independent morality instead of religion. They propose to teach the children what is right and wrong without referring to God at all, or to his divine revelation. Now, this we contend, can never be done. Morality must be built up on the solid foundation of revealed truth. Reason cannot take the place of the principles of Christianity. The dictates of reason are too changeable to serve as a guide, and it produces sometimes very hazy notions of morality, especially when blinded by passion. The votaries of infidelity, of free love and anarchy, all profess to be guided by reason. Independent morality therefore as a substitute for religion is a myth and delusion and can be of no avail as a remedy to the evil it is expected to correct. Rev. Dr. Stone, in a report on elementary public instruction made to the General Assembly of Ohio, declares that "every well informed man knows that, as a general fact, it is impossible to impress the obligations of morality with any efficiency on the heart of a child or on even that of an adult without an appeal to some code which is sustained by the authority of God."

Other friends of the public schools acknowledging their defect and the necessity of supplying it, say that this is to be accomplished by the Sunday-school and the family. Experience shows that this cannot be

done. No child will ever be impressed religiously as it should be by one or two hours of a Sunday-school. The healthy bronze of the laborer's face is not produced by a weekly exposure of an hour's duration, but by the daily and hourly influence of the solar rays, nor are the large and heavy crops the effect of the fierce and inundating deluge, but of the gentle and constant showers. A man does not become religious all at once, for virtue supposes an intellect that constant teaching has trained to admire the good and hate the evil, and a heart over which untiring vigilance has watched to crush out every excrescence that savored of wrong, and nurture every germ that had the fragrance of heaven. Religion must be kept before the child continually; it must be its daily food, morning, noon and night. "All instruction," says Dr. Anderson of the Rochester University, "unfolding the laws of science, literature and history, should be permeated with the warmth and the light and glory of the incarnate Redeemer." The place, therefore, to mould the heart is where the intellect is enlightened, and consequently in every schoolroom sound religious principles should be inculcated at the same time with secular knowledge.

Religion and science should go hand in hand; they never should be separated. "I know," says Cousin, "something of Europe, and never have I seen good schools where the spirit of Christianity was wanting."

Those who refer the child to the influence of its own home for spiritual training seem at first sight to advance what is the proper thing. We confess, indeed, that if all the parents were what they ought to be, and would give to their children at home all that care and attention due them, they might in a great measure prevent the evils resulting from the methods of the public school. It is well

known, however, that parents now a days are not overstocked with religion, and what they have not got they cannot give. As for those who may be blessed with the knowledge and fear of God, they may be wanting in the power to teach their little ones the principles and practices of their creed. All this applies to Catholics. Now regarding those outside the church, these may be divided into two classes, those who are members of some religious organization and those who do not profess to believe in any creed whatever. It is very evident that the religious training given to their children by the latter class, if given at all, must be of a very inferior quality, for what they do not consider as necessary for themselves they will not look upon as very essential to their offspring, and this class is the largest.

The self same thing may be said of the religious education given by the other class to their little ones, for these parents, though professing some adhesion to a particular sect, still do not look upon all other denominations as erroneous, so that with them, as a general thing, one religion is as good as another. Now, a man who looks upon all religions as equal will not be very strongly wedded to any, and none of them, certainly, will exercise much influence over him in the practical affairs of life. Hence this liberty of thought which he boasts of, in the ultimate analysis means no religion at all. The religious education imparted to his children by such a man will not be even a shadow of what it should be.

Neither the Sunday-school, therefore, nor the family can supply that lamentable deficiency of religious instruction that should be furnished by the public schools.

In looking back now over the whole field of controversy with regard to these schools we find every reason to condemn them and no reason at all to sustain them. They are essentially wrong as they are now organized and engineered and they should not be patronized by any one, Catholic or Protestant, who wishes his child brought up in a thoroughly religious manner. Catholics protest against them, not only as a source of great injustice to themselves and as most injurious to every child that frequents them, but also because instead of serving as a bulwark to the State, they are gnawing away continually at its very vitals. This is no rhetoric or dream of the imagination. Under their influence sound morality is becoming a thing of the past. Without morality there will be no respect for law, and when law shall cease to be obeyed for conscience sake, liberty will not long survive.

If we, therefore, love our children, if we love our country, if we wish to have justice done to all, let us purify our whole system of primary education, let us find some other method of instruction which, while it will satisfy the requirements of science, will not forget the demands of God. If we do this, then the angel who guards with jealous care the interests of this land, and who looks forward with ardent hope to its glorious millennium, will have every reason to rejoice. Religion will flourish, liberty will flourish and our country will grow old amidst the benedictions and love of a God-fearing people.

Our National Legacy.*

Our country to-day makes her annual visit to the graves of her fallen heroes. This visit is the outcome of her affection and her gratitude. In her care for the living she will not forget the dead, and so she goes year after year to those places of deep, silent meditation to drop a tear over their departed worth, and to bewail the fate that so abruptly stopped their short but brilliant career. She can never allow them to depart from her memory—

> The mother may forget the child
> That smiles so sweetly on her knee,
> But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
> And all that thou hast done for me.

They were indeed the noble sons of a noble mother, and they loved her with unstinted love. With looks of ecstatic joy they gazed in admiration at the tranquil beauty of her queenly countenance and fondly fancied themselves the children of the most matchless being that ever graced this sublunary sphere. Such were their sentiments towards her when they heard that her enemies had conspired against her life, and were about to hurl the javelin of death at her mighty heart. The report of the first gun that sent cannon balls crashing

*Spoken on Decoration Day in Fall River before the Grand Army of the Republic.

against the walls of Sumter fired their inmost souls. Quick as the lightning flash their duty was apparent. No hesitation was in their action. It was as if the whole land had been inspirited with Bryant's burning words :

Lay down the axe ; fling by the spade ;
Leave in its track the toiling plough ;
The rifle and the bayonet blade
For arms like yours were fitter now.
And let the hands that ply the pen
Quit the light task and learn to wield
The horseman's crooked wand, and rein
The charger on the battle field.

Ploughshares were turned into swords, saltpetre was changed by tons into powder, and strong, wicked-looking crafts of war sprang into existence as if by magic all along our coast. The student closed his book and threw it aside ; the merchant forgot the profits of his commerce, the Cincinnati left the fields they were tilling and the Muhlenbergs took off their clerical attire to put on the soldier's uniform. The uprising was universal. Down the rugged slopes of the Green Mountains came the sturdy sons of Vermont headed by the fife and drum. The shores of the great lakes felt the heavy tramp of the hardy Western boys marching shoulder to shoulder after their martial music. Rhode Island mustered out her troops under her Spragues and her Burnsides, while Massachusetts from her busy centers sent forth to the front bands of brave intrepid men, and their name was legion.

In the conflict that ensued were witnessed spectacles which, to use the language of the ancient classics, moved the gods and men to sympathy and admiration. They had sworn to save the Union and nothing could damp their ardor or diminish their energy. Privations

of every kind, disappointments without number, fatigue, hunger and burning fevers seemed but to stimulate their patriotism, and they left the field only when they saw the broken sword of Robert Lee and the bedraggled flag of the Confederacy lying at the feet of General Grant.

This great country, whose life they fought so bravely and so persistently to save is now in our keeping. We must love it, we must cherish it, we must guard it sacredly. We must not only be always ready to take up the sword in its defence when necessary, but we must be ever doing all that lies in our power to make it a most united, free and prosperous country. Union, freedom and prosperity combined are the three elements of a greatness that leaves no room for further ambition. By union is implied not alone that political tie that binds together the component parts of our nation, but especially that mystic bond of brotherhood, as Carlyle calls it, which makes all men one, to which Macaulay alludes in his lays of ancient Rome when he says :

Then none was for a party,
Then all were for the State,
Then the great men helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great;
Then lands were fairly portioned,
Then spoils were fairly sold,
The Romans were as brothers,
In the brave days of old.

Like the Romans of old, we too should be brothers, and we should never permit our national life to be embittered or disturbed by contentions or wranglings about subjects that have no reference at all to our political condition. Hence, for instance, the question of a man's religion should never enter into debates that

relate to the making and enforcing of laws, and above all should never control the decision of the ballot box. A man's religion is his own affair; it concerns no one else. The ballot box is a political instrument that should be used only to promote the cause of good government, not to ostracize or crush honest men because they are not of the same religion as ourselves. It is our aim as a people to have good laws, and good men in office to enforce them, men who will be always guided by justice and impartiality, and who will be ever looking after the best interests of the public. When we find such men we must elect them, whether they be Baptists or Congregationalists, Quakers, Catholics, Jews or Infidels. Political qualifications are to be treated as articles of merchandise. When we are about to make a purchase, it is the quality and the price of the goods, not the religious opinions of the merchant, that we take into consideration.

Along with the question of religion, that of race, too, should be completely removed from our civil intercourse. The distinction of races among American citizens is alien to the spirit of our constitution and should not be countenanced. To do away with the irritating prejudices that arise from this source, it is well to remember that to emigration is to be ascribed the origin and in no small degree the prosperity of this great country. We are a nation of emigrants. If we did not come here voluntarily ourselves, our fathers came before us. They came in the caravels of Columbus, in the Mayflower of Miles Standish and in the prison hulks of Cromwell. They came with the Spaniards to St. Augustine, with the French to Carolina, with Raleigh to Roanoke, with Carrol to Baltimore. They came with Cabot, Verrazzani, with Hudson, with

Drake and Balboa. If we are not then emigrants ourselves, we are surely the sons of emigrants.

However, although we are thus formed from and enlarged by so many heterogeneous elements, we must never forget that we are a people entirely distinct from every other people. We are all assimilated together in one great body by the chemistry of citizenship. None of us now belongs to any other nation because we or our forefathers came from it. I, myself, was born in Ireland, and there is no Irishman on the face of the earth surpasses me in the love of my native land. I love her green hills, her fertile valleys, her limpid streams and her princely harbors. I feel proud of her history, proud of her ancient glories and her modern triumphs. I linger with pleasure over the story of her kings and her warriors, of her orators and of her statesmen, of her minstrels, her sages and her saints. I exult at her most cordial relations to this republic, especially when looking back through the history of the revolutionary war and of the late rebellion I see her sons shedding their blood on every battle-field and claiming a share in every victory of the American flag.

But though I am an Irishman by birth, I am now a citizen of these United States by choice. I owe no political fealty to Ireland as I have sworn absolute allegiance to this republic. Let no man call me an Irish-American. I repudiate the term. There is no such thing as an Irish-American as there is no such thing as Yankee-American, Dutch-American or French-American. Citizenship is something absolute. It cannot be modified, it admits of no prefixes. We are all Americans then, pure and simple. We wish to be on good terms with all the nations of the earth, but we claim

kindred with none. We often indeed have heard it repeated both by men across the water and by some among ourselves that we are a branch of the Anglo-Saxon race. The assertion is a baseless fabrication. We are not an Anglo-Saxon race. To that race we acknowledge that some of our citizens owe their origin, but these are in a small minority, and are outnumbered by those of German, French and Irish extraction as one to fifty. We are Americans then and Americans only, and that is good enough for us. Let us therefore discard religious and race prejudices from among us. Let us foster towards each other the sincere and warm affection of true brotherhood and our union will be to us a source of happiness and joy, of far-reaching influence and of gigantic strength.

Besides making this the most united, we should leave nothing undone to make it the freest country also. "'Tis liberty alone," says Cowper, "that gives the flower of fleeting life its luster and perfume." "Liberty," says Patrick Henry, "liberty, the greatest of all earthly blessings—give us that precious jewel and you may take everything else."

Now, before we proceed any further, let us inquire what is the meaning of this word liberty. Liberty does not consist, as all learned men will tell us, in doing as one pleases; that would be license. Lord Mansfield seems to give its most correct signification when he defines it as living under a government of law. Restraint and compulsion therefore constitute the very essence of liberty, so much so that all law givers from Confucius downwards have never sought in their enactments what a person may do, as much as what a person may not do. This is so true that it applies even to the divine law, which is founded on checks, limitations and restraints

and enforced by menaces and penalties. Such was the idea that Rome's great orator and jurist, Cicero, had formed of liberty when he said that it consisted in being the slave of law. Without law therefore there can be no such thing as liberty, and as it is equally certain that without religion there can be no such thing as law, it follows as a logical consequence that unless we are a religious people we cannot be a free people. This dependence of law upon religion will become quite apparent with a little consideration.

We all unhappily know and feel the great inclinations within us to evil. There is a charm, an infatuation connected with what is wrong that draws our hearts off captive, notwithstanding the earnest protest of our better judgment. *Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor.* To strengthen our wills against this seductive power of evil, we have need of an agent that will enable us to surmount all temptations under whatsoever circumstances they may occur. The observance of the laws, human and divine, and the practice of morality cannot be left to the fickle fancies of the individual. Should men choose between right or wrong only from a sense of external propriety, from human respect or on account of the good or evil temporary consequences of their action, vice would multiply in a manner that would defy every effort of the civil authorities, wickedness would be committed in a thousand ways that no human laws could reach, crimes would be perpetrated against nature that would destroy the individual and the family, and that would sap and undermine the very foundations of society. Against such an inundation of evil, religion is the only barrier we can oppose, and by religion I do not mean any compound of hysterical sentimentalities or of vague, undetermined, ever fluctuat-

ing notions, but I mean those sound, fixed principles of revealed truth that owe their immutability to the very unchangeableness of God himself, and that, rooted in the intelligence and the heart, are alone capable of sustaining their possessor in the hour of trial and temptation. In order, therefore, that we may be a free people we must be a religious people, and as we wish our children to inherit the liberties we now enjoy, let us endeavor to make them religious also. Let us, whilst we are instilling into their youthful minds the rudiments of secular learning, use every effort to impress on their hearts the principles of the holy gospel, the love and the fear of God. Religion is the best custodian of our liberties now and the best channel in which to transfer them to posterity. It was the prediction of Benjamin Franklin made on the last day of the convention that framed the constitution that it would, as any other plan of government, after a term of years merge into despotism when the people by progressive corruption would show themselves unfit for a free government.

To unity and freedom we must add prosperity as the third factor of our nation's greatness. Prosperity is the result of intelligence, energy and thrift; and when we look around and see how well equipped our people are with all these qualities, we are convinced that this should be a most prosperous country. But although we find wealth accumulating most enormously in the public treasury, in the coffers of private corporations and in the hands of millionaires, yet when we look for prosperity among the rank and file of our citizens, we confess to a great disappointment at not finding it. There is evidently a great gap between the rich and the poor and the gap appears to be widening. The rich are becoming richer and the poor poorer. Monopolies and

trusts are becoming more common and more deadly, and by their power and influence the price of articles of consumption is increased while wages are gradually reduced to a point sufficient to only keep body and soul together. The consequence is that in the relations of labor and capital something seems to be out of joint; capital is afraid of labor and labor looks on capital as a grinding task master. This is not the passive dream of a theorist, but a fact that every man with his eyes open can see.

Now the practical question arises, where are we to look for a remedy for this state of affairs? The remedy is certainly not to be looked for in the atrocious purposes of the red flag. That has been settled once for all by the effective work of the gallows in Chicago. The American people are too sensible to search for reform in revolution, bombshells, blood and terror. Neither is the remedy to come from confiscation of land as proposed by Henry George, who contends that the private ownership of land is against natural justice and that it should be uprooted and destroyed without one penny of compensation to the so-called owners. Nor will the remedy be found in strikes. Strikes are a fruitful source of injustice, disorder and suffering, and should be condemned and opposed by every friend of the workingman. The day of strikes should pass away forever, as even Mr. Powderly himself would now tell us. Instead therefore of having recourse to these wild, visionary, mischievous schemes for redressing his wrongs, the workingman should go for this purpose directly to the ballot box. With his hand resting on the ballot box the workingman can say with more truth even than Louis XIV, "I am the State." The ballot box speaks with stentorian lungs and is more powerful

than dynamite. By it avaricious men can be prevented from combining and conspiring against the welfare of the public; by it corporations can be made to serve the State whose creatures they are, instead of ruling it; by it the murderous trusts will be annihilated and starvation prices for labor relegated among the things of the past. The diffusion therefore of universal prosperity through the country depends on the workingmen of the country and it is the duty of the philanthropists to teach them their power and the right way of using it.

I have spoken of union, of liberty and prosperity. That these three essentials of political greatness may flourish and conspire to our country's welfare they must be thoroughly understood and duly appreciated. For these died the heroes whom we honor to-day. For these we too shall die if the occasion demands it, that they may forever constitute a halo of glory surrounding the genius of our country. What rapturous thoughts fill our mind as the image of that goddess breaks upon our imagination! Behold how majestically, how fearlessly, how peacefully she stands on her high pedestal before the nations of the earth! Tyrants view her from the distance and shading their eyes from her splendors are paralyzed with fear. The oppressed of every nation see in her a vision of future deliverance. The manacle of the slave is lying among the flowers at her feet. Binding her brows is the diadem of immortality. With her hand she steadies the shaft from whose summit floats on the breezes the standard of her empire. Around her are clustered sixty millions of faithful, devoted subjects, all equal in her sight, none greater than another. Only the aristocracy of genius, the aristocracy of learning, the aristocracy of virtue are recognized in their ranks. And as with swelling hearts and beaming eyes

they look up to that banner floating above them, they exclaim with all the enthusiasm of their souls:

Flag of the free heart's hope and home,
By angel hands to valor given!
Thy stars have lit the welkin dome
And all thy hues were born of heaven.
Forever float that standard sheet!
Where breathes the foe but falls before us,
With freedom's soil beneath our feet
And freedom's banner floating o'er us.

Our Nation's Heroes.*

Ingratitude is something mean, ignoble, and detestable, and lowers a man even below the level of a brute; for a dog will lick the hand of him who throws him a bone to pick. Gratitude, on the contrary, whether it be towards Almighty God, the great Giver of every good gift or towards our fellow man, is a virtue that does honor to the heart from which it springs, and always elevates and dignifies its happy possessor. It is this charming feature of a great soul that gives to the ceremonies of to-day their impressive character. It is a festival of gratitude we are celebrating. A nation, whilst she weeps over her departed heroes, remembers with pride their manly deeds and strews their hallowed graves with the choicest flowers of spring in testimony of her high appreciation of their sterling worth. History will not fail to write their records in letters of gold. They were not the vassals of some haughty chieftain arousing them in barbarous times by a blind attachment to his family name, or engaging them to espouse his quarrels by the music and festivities of his baronial hall. They were the chieftains of their own cause. They were not soldiers by profession; they were not bred to arms nor from early training attached to military life. They were from every walk in life—mechanics from their daily avocations—merchants from the counting desk—students from their literary pursuits—and all fired with one ambition, the preservation of their country's unity. They now sleep their final sleep,

*Preached on Decoration Day at the Catholic Cemetery, Providence, R. I.

wrapt in bloody shrouds, but they sleep well. They met their death in an ecstacy of courage and patriotism, their souls went forth in the cause of their country, and all the glory which this world gives to poetry and eloquence is not worthy to be compared with the fame and the love in which their memories will be enshrined. Their places on this earth and in their homes will know them no more, but their images will live in loving hearts and in the fond recollections of a grateful people.

Among those who fell on the blood-deluged fields of the late rebellion and amid its dark and deadly tempests of iron and fire, many, I am proud to say, were countrymen of my own, sons of the Emerald Isle. In all the trials which this country has gone through, from the first struggle for national independence down to the last war, Irishmen always did their duty nobly to the land of their adoption. It should not have been otherwise. The country in which people choose to live, whose benefits they enjoy, whose honors they share and whose hopes they bequeath to their posterity, has a rightful claim to their services, even to the sacrifice of life. Hence the victories of the American flag are largely indebted to Irish blood and Irish valor. Should we question the individuals who compose any Irish congregation or assembly, we would find that many of them have associations with the army, in friends or relatives shot down at the cannon's mouth or whose lives wasted away under the direful influence of fevers caught in the swamps of the South. And not only in this country did their loss fill lowly dwellings throughout the land with affliction, but brought sorrow and tears and wailing into many a thatched cottage in Ireland from Dublin to Galway, from the Giants' Cause-

way to Cape Clear. In return for all this, I ask no exclusive honor for the Irish soldier who fought under the stars and stripes in the late conflict. I only desire that his memory be held sacred along with the other heroes who fell by his side, and that no narrow-minded bigotry or prejudice shall ever be permitted in this great country, to deprive his kindred and friends of those glorious privileges for which he so willingly gave his heart's blood.

In conclusion, fellow citizens and soldiers, let me express the hope, that the memories which this day revives may never be obliterated from the mind of this mighty nation, and that as long as this union shall endure, and as long as liberty shall be prized and fostered by the sons of men, the names and fame of our fallen brave may always be cherished with love and enthusiasm.

Intemperance.*

The Sixth Annual Convention of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America convenes to-day, the 4th of July 1876, in the city of Philadelphia. This city, as you are aware, is at present the great centre on which is fixed the attention of the entire world. The great exhibition now being held at Fairmount Park, has not only stirred up every section of our own country, but its magnetic influence has been felt in the remotest borders of civilization. Distant nations vie with each other in the display they are making here to-day, of all that the rules of art could fashion or the genius of men could invent. Ships heavily laden with everything that could please the eye or gratify the tastes of a civilized people have ploughed their way over almost boundless oceans, and have brought their priceless cargoes safe to the magnificent buildings of our exposition. Alongside of these productions of foreign climes, and in noble contrast with them, are the diversified specimens of our own multitudinous industries, inventions and appliances, works of beauty and usefulness that speak volumes of praise for our young Republic.

To witness this imposing display of the world's riches, these astounding achievements of the human mind and human industry, many weary, footsore pilgrims are daily arriving, not only from every quarter of our mighty empire, but also from among the sunburnt nations of the South and from the historic lands beyond the seas. They crowd the city to study

*Opening address at the Annual Convention of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America, at Philadelphia, July 4, 1876.

the progress of the age and the triumphs of civilization. We too have journeyed hither but for quite another purpose. The escutcheon of this nineteenth century presents to our admiring gaze many glittering splendors, but its varied beauties fail to hide the foul blot that disfigures its surface. The vice of intemperance not only works its deeds of death among its individual devotees, but it saddens the hearts of all who rejoice in their country's development and increasing grandeur. We are indeed far advanced in everything implied under the name of progress, but our condition is by no means what it would have been, had not the excessive use of intoxicating drinks been one of our distinguishing faults. Therefore it is that we are assembled here to-day, to raise our solemn protest against this widespread vice, and to condemn it in the name of God, in the name of civilization and in the name of that humanity which Christ redeemed with his precious blood.

One hundred years ago, a congress of heroes assembled in this city. They were few in number but they were manly in their bearing, strong minded, noble hearted, resolute and confident in the justice and ultimate success of the cause they espoused. To them can be well applied the words of the poet—

> Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
> I see the lords of human kind pass by ;
> Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band
> By forms unfashioned, fresh from nature's hand,
> Fierce in their native hardness of soul
> True to imagined right, above control.

They found their country wearing the collar of servitude and oppressed by a distant taskmaster, they saw its energies crippled, and its aspirations smothered in their birth, and they swore in their hearts that things

would be thus no longer. Rising up then with all the vigor of their manhood, they threw off the galling yoke of the oppressor and proclaiming themselves and their fellow citizens free men, they appealed to the sword and staked their lives and their fortunes and their sacred honor on the issue.

Like those men of one hundred years ago we are pained to see our beautiful country blighted by the presence of an enemy, and an enemy, too, more oppressive and harder to conquer than the one against whom we do battle with powder and steel. Thousands and thousands of otherwise good, honest-hearted men are his willing slaves who live lives of the most abject misery, without peace in the present and without hopes for the future. To break the chains of this bondage, to beat down and annihilate the monstrous fiend now stalking about so defiantly through our land, should engage the constant efforts of everyone who loves his country and has a particle of charity towards his neighbor. We invite your most earnest attention, therefore, to this subject of intemperance, ask you to join with us in a crusade against this common foe and aid us to rid the soil of his hateful presence. Our standard has been unfurled and the battle begun. We are fighting too, it must be remembered, under the inspiring genius of a great leader, the holy Roman Catholic Church. This is a fact that must never be lost sight of. Temperance societies are but of yesterday, whilst the Catholic Church has been from the beginning the constant advocate of temperance. She taught it to the Greek philosopher in the school of Alexandria, to the Quirite on the banks of the Tiber, and to-day she is preaching it where the name and nature of temperance societies have never yet been heard.

With her we shall succeed, without her we shall be miserable failures. Unless guided by her superior wisdom, our fate will be that of a vessel without a helmsman at the rudder. It flounders about at the mercy of the winds and the waves, and finally strikes upon the rocks and goes down with all on board.

Let, therefore, the love of God, of man and of our glorious country, inspire us with great zeal in promoting the cause of temperance, but in order that we may succeed in our efforts let us put our trust in heaven and be always humbly guided by the constituted authorities of the Catholic Church.

Freemasonry.

The cosmopolitan character of freemasonry, its popularity, its influence, its obtrusiveness, its condemnation by all the sovereign Pontiffs from Clement XII, to Leo XIII, and by many religious bodies outside the church from the Protestant Consistory of Hanover in 1745, to the recent united Presbyterian Assembly at Buffalo, should naturally encourage a thorough investigation of its principles, practices and tendencies. The result of such an investigation would be a revelation to a great many. In the light of the facts connected with it, and of the occasional utterances of its acknowledged leaders, freemasonry certainly must be regarded as the most impious and gigantic conspiracy against faith and morals that the world has ever witnessed, and one of the most deadly evils that could exist within an enlightened Christian Government. It owes its continued existence to the glamour of its rites, its outside show, its pretended antiquity and to its awful secrecy.

It may seem that I have made very severe and sweeping assertions against a society existing in our own land, counting among its members so many good and upright men, even George Washington himself, men who would never have entered it or remained for one moment within its ranks were it such a society as I have described. That good men are and have been members of it, we have no doubt, because its evil designs have not always been apparent. It is true, indeed, the greater number of British and American masons abhor the evils I have described, yet how can they absolve

themselves from sharing the guilt, inasmuch as they are members of the same world-wide society. It is for them to show if they can, that they are not in fellowship with those masons whose crimes we detest. In our country, a spirit of curiosity, the example of men whose lives are beyond every suspicion of evil, the prospect of reaching a higher social standing, the desire of worldly gain and political preferment are some of the reasons that lead unthinking men into the meshes of this spider's web.

It was no doubt for some reason or other like these that Washington entered the order. That he was not enamored with it or its working, we may gather from the vigor with which in his later days he denounced all secret societies and warned his fellow citizens against them. If indeed good men continue in the order it is very often because they know just as little about the true spirit of masonry after as before initiation. This, though it appears very strange to a great majority, is perfectly true. Masons, we must remember, have their esoteric and exoteric doctrines, the former for the high-up members of the back lodges, the latter for the profane or outsiders and members of low degree.

This distinction of doctrines we find in the words which the ritual of the Mother Lodge of the Three Globes puts into the mouth of the master of the lodge while initiating a member into the degree of senior, one of the high degrees of the Scotch Rite. "By means of this degree," says he, "a thick wall is raised between us and the profane and even between many of our own. What you have learned so far is nothing compared with the secrets which shall certainly be revealed to you in the future. The care we take to hide them even from our brothers has surely given you ideas

worthy of the thing." Albert Pike who holds a high place among the leaders and exponents of American masonry, tells us about the same thing in his "Dogma and Morals." "The blue degrees," says he, "are but the outer court of the temple. Part of the symbols are displayed there to the initiated, but he is intentionally misled by false interpretations. It is not intended that he shall understand them, but it is intended that he imagine that he does understand them. Their true explanation is reserved for the Princes of Masonry." Under this system of reservation and deception practiced by masonry on its own members, very few become acquainted with the secrets, the views and plans of their Princes. This conclusion is sustained by a simple inspection of the ceremonial prescribed for the conferring of the degrees of entered apprentice, fellow-craft and master mason commonly called the blue degrees, but also by the statement of the *Masonic World* in its August number of 1866. Out of the eight millions that it then claimed for the order it gives us to understand that seven and one-half millions are little more than masons in name. When so few, therefore, are illumined with that light, which they are led in the first degrees to believe will later on flood their anxious souls, it is no wonder that fair-minded men see no reason for leaving an order which to them may only mean conviviality and benevolence. The personal character, then, of the individual members may be good or bad. That is not the question. Our contention now is with the order itself which is justly condemned, we claim, for many weighty reasons.

In the first place freemasonry is a fraud and lives and thrives on fraud. It practices fraud on its members, as we have shown above, by pretending to give them

knowledge which it never imparts. It practices fraud in asserting its own origin, which varies most wonderfully with the taste of each masonic writer. "It is no secret," says Town, in his System of Speculative Masonry, "that Masonry is of divine origin." Bradley, another standard masonic writer, though he thinks a good deal of masonry, does not, however, coincide with Town as regards its origin. "Masonry," says he, "is the most perfect and sublime institution ever formed by man." Some seek for the origin of masonry among the shadows of antediluvian twilight, others look for it among the builders of Babel's tower or of the Egyptian pyramids or of the temple at Jerusalem. But these poetic fancies of lying enthusiasts are very far from the truth. Masonry is of a very modern origin, being not yet two hundred years old, as it dates only from June 24, 1717. On that day was inaugurated the system of speculative masonry or freemasonry, as we understand it. If it existed before that time, it is very strange that it should have escaped the scrutinizing eyes of the Roman Pontiffs who have been always so bitterly opposed to it, or that it is never mentioned by our great historians Hume, Gibbon, Rollin or England. Before the above date, it is true there existed guilds of operative masonry or in other words societies of stone masons banded together for the legitimate purposes of their trade. Sir Christopher Wrenn was the last grand representative of operative masonry. It died with him. It was to the skill and enterprise of these societies that we owe so many magnificent buildings whose architectural glories are the pride and boast of the countries to which they belong. These societies were not only recognized and blessed by the church, but were alse favored by the State from whose action

in freeing their members from certain taxes and obligations came the word freemason. In the religious convulsions of the sixteenth century these guilds of operative masonry fell into the hands of bad men and finally drifted away entirely from their original institute. The speculative masonry of to-day, therefore, can claim no more affinity with the operative masonry of the middle ages than with the guilds of bakers and blacksmiths. They are two different things.

The claim of freemasonry to a remote antiquity, through the society of stone masons, is therefore false and spurious.

Freemasonry, moreover, practices fraud in pretending to be founded for benevolence and charity and to be in the possession of secrets that pertain to the happiness and welfare of mankind. Benevolence and charity are not at all what freemasons imagine them to be. They are born of the love of God and of our neighbor and are not restricted in their action to any order of men. The benevolence and charity of freemasons on the contrary spring from human motives and are more like the relief-dues of an insurance company or a mutual aid society. In the supposition, too, that masonry is only a benevolent and charitable organization no explanation can be given of its oath-bound obligations, its ruthless penalties or of its secret conclaves. As regards those wonderful mysterious secrets it possesses, their true history will be found in the "Rosy Cross Philosophy of John Valentine Andrea," who lived in the beginning of the seventeenth century. Although he wrote his book as a literary joke in the style of Munchausen, yet it was taken in real earnest by a great many who claimed for the new philosophy a great many extraordinary things. According to them it

had a heavenly origin, an unbounded excellence, a wonderful secret, a universal medicine and the celebrated philosopher's stone. This rosicrucian humbug, after flourishing for several years, finally died out as a distinct philosophical system, and was then adopted by freemasonry which seems willing to pick up a little of everything lying around about. These mysterious secrets, then, that masonry claims to possess exist only in the imagination. It cannot be shown where they came from, who was their guardian before the eighteenth century when freemasonry first came into existence, or why they are not given to the world at large, if they are so potent for good as it is alleged. The pretension, therefore, of masonry to any valuable secrets is a fraud. It has indeed secrets, as we will see later on, but they are secrets of which it would not care to make a public boast.

To the guilt of fraud, acts of which are offences against the individual, we must add that of felony against the body politic, whose authority freemasonry most treasonably usurps. There are only two societies that come directly from God, one is the Church and the other is the state, and every other society to be legitimate or lawful must be in everthing subordinated to one or the other of these. According to this principle masonry does not only not justify its own existence as a society, but by constituting itself an independent legislative and executive body, arrogates to itself a most unwarrantable power. It exercises this power first in the administration of oaths. According to the common consent of men an oath can be administered only by a corporation having directly or indirectly a divine sanction either in the civil or ecclesiastical line, and then too only under certain conditions. But masonry not

only administers oaths without any authority, but oaths too which are bad in themselves, which no conscientious man can take. It exercises this power in the second place in the inflicting of most atrocious penalties, even of death itself, as we see in the cases of the Czar Paul I, in Russia ; of William Morgan in America ; of Marshal Prim in Spain; of Pellegrino Rossi in Italy ; of Garcia Moreno in Ecuador, and Leon Gambetta in France. That these men received their sentences of death in the lodges of masonry there can be no reasonable doubt.

The worst effect of masonry, however, as an organization is not to be found in murder, which, we are willing to believe is not of frequent occurrence, but rather in the daily corroding, blighting influence it has on the individual, the family and society at large. It injures the individual by leading him to form evil habits in the feasting and revelries of the lodge, by drawing off his mind from the pursuit of useful and desirable attainments, by filling his thoughts with a silly conceit at the possession of empty and extravagant titles, and with a childish love for gaudy trappings and pageantry more becoming an Indian chief than a civilized man. It injures the family by depriving it so often of its head whom it leads by degrees to find more pleasure in the promiscuous and dangerous gatherings of the order, than in the virtuous company of his wife and children. It injures society by encouraging vice. This it does by concealing and screening evil doers, and by affording them means to escape, by sealing the lips of witnesses, by corrupting judges, juries and members of the legislature. That masonry has thus affected society, we can deduce not only from the masonic oath itself, but also from the words of Mr. Brainard, a distinguished

mason, in his celebrated speech at New London. "The masons," he says, "are distributed too with the means of knowing one another and the means of co-operating at the desk in the legislative hall, on the bench, in every gathering of business, in every enterprise of government." To learn more of the evil effects of the craft on society, we may take up the history of the French Revolution in 1789, and of the Commune in 1871. These twin sisters of iniquity with all their horrors and satanic abominations, with all their wild, anti-social, inhuman, impious, blood-curdling doings, were the legitimate offspring of masonry. The Protestant historian Washmuth remarks in his "Histoire de France" that the anti-social and anti-religious literature which prepared the way in France for the overthrow of law and order, towards the close of the last century, found its most potent ally in freemasonry. "When secret societies in France," says Preston, "became sufficiently numerous and powerful, the signal was given, and on the 14th of July 1789, all France was in arms, the government was changed and the monarch was imprisoned." On this point we have also the authority of the *Masonic World* for May 6, 1883, which leaves no doubt at all upon the question. "It is true that all through the centuries we (the freemasons) have combated superstition and despotism, that we made the revolution of 1798." As regards the late horror, the Commune, whose bloody records are all before us, this seems to be especially dear to the soul of masonry. "The Commune," says Brother Thirifogue in his address to the communistic government in behalf of a masonic deputation, "is the grandest sight which has ever been presented to the world. It is the modern temple of Solomon, and all freemasons are pledged to defend it."

No further testimony we presume is necessary to show the evil and destructive character of freemasonry as a society.

But the most serious charge we have to bring against freemasonry is its diabolical impiety in setting itself up as a system of religion with teachings and tendencies most opposed to divine truth and most inimical to man's present happiness and future hopes. Masonic writers try to tell us what this religion is, but though they vary somewhat in their explanations of it, yet they succeed in impressing us with the fact that it consists principally in a disbelief of a divine revelation and even of God himself. "Masonry," says Town, "comprises those great and fundamental principles which constitute the very essence of the Christian religion." Mr. Town does not tell us what those principles are, but that they are anything but of a Christian character we learn from another source. Albert Pike, speaking on the same subject, informs us, "that it is the common glory of freemasonry that requiring only that a candidate shall believe and put his trust in a living and personal God, and shall believe in the continued existence of the soul of man after the death of the body, it receives into its lodges the Christian of every sect, the Hebrew, the Moslem and the Parsee and unites them in the holy bond of brotherhood." In this and every profession of masonic faith it will be noticed that the saving grace of the redemption is never alluded to and Jesus Christ is never mentioned except on a par with such characters as Confucius and Mahomet. The creed of Pike, though very diminutive, is too large for the *Masonic World*. In its issue of May 6, 1883, we find the following statement: "Freemasonry is progress under every form, in every branch

of human activity. It teaches us that there is only one religion, one true and therefore one natural religion, the worship of humanity." Nearly the same thing is told us by the *Masonic Review* in its September number of 1835, "The god of freemasonry is nature, its religion the religion of nature, its morality the morality of nature." By the morality of nature, as we may gather from other sources, is here understood the morality of the brute creation, the morality of Mormonism or of Sodom and Gomorrha. In this connection we may here quote a clause in the master mason's oath. "Furthermore do I promise and swear that I will not violate the chastity of a master mason's wife, mother, sister or daughter, I knowing them to be such." The restrictions contained in this oath constitute the only restraint, as is very plain, that a mason need have on his passions. This oath throws considerable light on their so-called "morality of nature."

To get a better knowledge of the development and tendencies of the masonic religion we must go back to the time of Adam Weishaupt, a German professor of law, who was born in 1748 and died in 1830. He was a member of a masonic lodge in Paris and the founder of the Illuminati. How closely connected was this sect, which he founded, with freemasonry we have abundant evidence to show. The original documents of the Illuminati were published by Stark, the Superintendent of the Calvinistic Churches in Prussia, in his "Triumphe de la Philosophie" and after they had been carefully examined by him, the conclusion arrived at was, "that the sect of the Illuminati aimed at Atheism and the destruction of all, of even parental authority; that it had its origin in French freemasonry and having spread throughout many districts of Germany, sent

back its adepts once more, to swell the ranks of the masonic lodges of France in their revolutionary triumph," Tome II, Chap. 12. The testimony of President Dwight of Yale College, in reference to the same subject will not be controverted. After telling us that the principles of Weishaupt were "that God is nothing, that government is a curse and authority a usurpation, that civil society is the only apostacy of man, that the possession of property is robbery, that chastity and natural affections are mere prejudices, and that adultery, assasination, poisoning and other crimes of a similar nature are lawful and even virtuous," the learned scholar goes on to say: "A large branch of the masonic societies in Germany and France had already adopted the same objects as the great and controlling ones of all their personal and united labors. Here secrecy furnished the most advantageous opportunities for the formation of every design and the most advantageous contrivance for its successful execution. Here the spirit of hostility against religion and government was kindled and blown up into a flame. Here, in a word, all that vice could wish and profligacy attempt, was proposed, matured and set forward for execution." This authoritative information concerning the almost incredible wickedness of freemasonry, will not allow us to doubt what Professor Robinson of Edinburgh University, tells of his own personal experience in France and Italy. "I was frequently," said he, "led into France and Italy. There and more remarkably in France I found that all the lodges had been the haunts of many projectors and fanatics both in science, in religion and in politics, and some lodges had become schools of irreligion and licentiousness." "I have found," he continues, "that the covert of a

masonic lodge had been employed in every country for venting and propagating sentiments in religion and politics that could not have circulated in public without exposing the author to great danegr. I found that this impunity had gradually encouraged men of licentious principles to become more bold and to teach doctrines subversive of all our notions of morality. I have observed these doctrines gradually diffusing and mixing with all the different systems of freemasonry, till at last an association has been formed for the express purposes of rooting out all the religious establishments and overturning all the existing governments of Europe."

It must be plain, therefore, that freemasonry instead of containing the principles that constitute the very essence of Christianity, contains on the contrary principles and practices most destructive of it. Notwithstanding its seeming reverence for Christianity, for Christian principles, for the Bible and for the Cross, it is the deadly enemy of revealed religion and therefore a most anti-Christian society. "Freemasonry," says Guerike, a Protestant historian, in his Manual of Church History has had an undoubted influence on positive Christianity; it has unceasingly labored with its cold hammer to beat down the edifice of faith, that thus the Church of Christ being reduced to ruins, it might erect a new structure, even though this should be no other than a second tower of Babel." Had we no other proof of the antagonistic hatred of freemasonry for Christianity, we might only refer to the solemn and public ovation given to Voltaire by the assembled representatives of all the united lodges of France just before that arch enemy of religion breathed his last. That act alone shows most clearly the spirit of the order.

Now the patrons of masonry here in this country may, by a derisive smile and a wave of the hand, try to throw discredit on all that has been advanced. Freemasonry, they say, is not the bugbear it is represented to be, it is a simple, harmless, benevolent institution. This we absolutely deny, for we have shown it to be a fraud, a wicked, dangerous society and an anti-Christian religion. Besides, even if the lodges of this country were not contaminated with the principles of Weishaupt, and we believe they are to some extent, yet as they are connected and controlled by the same spirit that rules the European lodges, each one becomes partaker in the wickedness committed by all the others. The lodges may be different but the body is morally one. Moreover, as the same cause produces the same effect, each lodge is liable at any moment to become infected with all the moral disorders and criminal excesses that characterize the very worst of the sect. "The masons of to-day," says the *Masonic World* of May 6, 1883, "are the spiritual heirs of those of the last century, because we carry on their work and because we shall transmit the same to our children."

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